

## CHAPTER III

## VASISTHA AND VIŚVĀMITRA

VASIṢṬHA and VIŚVĀMITRA are among the foremost seers of the Ṛgveda. They are regarded as having seen entire Maṇḍalas (maṇḍaladraṣṭāraḥ), the seventh (104 hymns) and the third (62 hymns) respectively. There have been innumerable references to the two sages in Sanskrit Literature, ancient and modern. Much has been written also about them by Orientalists of the past and present century. Nothing new and sensational can be unearthed now. The purpose of this study is mainly to unravel the problem of the ancient feud between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra and understand their mutual relationship in its true perspective. Let us first know what our most ancient authority, the Ṛgveda, has to say about them, comment and criticism being put off to a later section of the chapter. For the sake of convenience, we just invert the order and deal with Viśvāmitra first. In the Ṛgvedic compilation, Viśvāmitra's is the earlier maṇḍala. It is but accidental, carrying absolutely no significance of relative superiority. It is not a case for the maxim 'abhyarhitam pūrvam'!

## I

## RGVEDA

## (A) VIŚVĀMITRA—

There are eight contexts in RV in which the name of Viśvāmitra occurs<sup>1</sup> :— curiously, all grammatical cases are represented except the accusative.

1. Viśvāmitro yád ávahat Sudāsam III 53.9
2. Viśvāmitrāya dádato maghāni III 53.7
3. Viśvāmitrasya rakṣati III 53.12.
4. Viśvāmitrā arāsata III 53.13.
5. Viśvāmitrā utá ta Indra nūnám X 89.17.
6. Viśvāmitrebhir idhyate ájasraḥ III 1.21.
7. Revád Agne Viśvāmitreṣu sám yóḥ III 18.4.
8. Práti Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni dáme X 167.4.

(1) Mahāñ ṛṣir devajā devájūtó'stabhnāt śíndhum arṇavám  
nṛcáksāḥ /

Viśvāmitro yád ávahat Sudāsam ápriyāyata Kuśikébhir  
Índraḥ // (III 53.9).

1. Consult Max Müller's Indices attached to the third and fourth volumes of the first Edition, also Bloomfield's Vedic Concordance.

*Translation—*

Great Ṛṣi, heaven-born, (he) favoured of the gods, leader of men, stopped the river in floods. When (such a) Viśvāmitra steered Sudās through, Indra was pleased with the Kuśikas.

- (2) Imé Bhojā Āṅgirasō vīrūpāḥ  
Divásputráso ásurasya vīráḥ /  
Viśvāmitrāya dádato maghāni  
Sahasrasāvé prátiranta áyuh // III 53.7.

*Translation—*

These Bhojas,<sup>2</sup> these various Āṅgirasas, and these heroic sons of mighty heaven indeed, increase my life, by bestowing on me riches in this thousand-offer-sacrifice.

- (3) Yá imé ródasī ubhé  
ahám índram átuṣṭavam  
Viśvāmitrasya rakṣati  
Bráhmédám Bhāratam jánam // III 53.12.

*Translation—*

I have made these Heaven and Earth extol Indra, and (surely) this prayer of Viśvāmitra protects the Bhārata<sup>3</sup> race.

- (4) Viśvāmitrā arāsata  
Bráhméndrāya vajrīṇe /  
Kārad ínnaḥ surādhasaḥ // III 53.13.

*Translation—*

The Viśvāmitras have addressed a prayer to Indra, the wielder of the thunderbolt. He will indeed make us very opulent.

- (5) Evá te vayám Indra bluñjatinām  
Vidyāma sumatinām nāvānām /  
Vidyāma vástor ávasā grṇānto  
Viśvāmitrā utá ta Indra nūnám // X 89.17.

*Translation—*

May we, O Indra, the descendants<sup>4</sup> of Viśvāmitra, sincerely praising you through the day for protection, obtain thy protecting (favours), may we obtain thy recent (favours).

- (6) Jánmañjanman níhoto<sup>5</sup> jātávedāḥ  
Viśvāmitrebhir idhyate ájasraḥ /  
Tásya vayám sumataú yajñīyasya  
Ápi bhadré saumanasé syāma // III 1.21.

2. Bhojas not mentioned among the manuṣya-names of the Nighaṇṭu (II.3) as for instance the Turvaśas, Druhyus, Yadus etc.

3. According to Nighaṇṭu III 18 Bharatāḥ (Bhāratāḥ) and Kuravaḥ are among the eight Ṛtvic-names : Bhāratam Bharata-kulam janam rakṣati—Sāyana.

4. The Viśvāmitras who figure in this maṇḍala are Ṛṣabha, Kata, Utkila Kātya, Gāthín Kauśika, Devaśravas and Devavāta (Bhāratāu), Prajāpati Vaiśvāmitra. Outside this maṇḍala, Madhucchandas Vaiśvāmitra appears in the first (RV I 1-10) with his son Jetā (RV I 11) ; Reṇu appears in the tenth (RV X 89), so also Aṣṭaka (X 104), Purāṇa (X 160) and Aghamarṣaṇa Mādhu-

5. Janman-janman sarveṣu manuṣyesu nihito Jātavedāḥ // Sāyana.

*Translation—*

The sacred fire (Jātavedas) is indeed kept by every man, but the Viśvāmitras kindle him ever more. May we, who already enjoy his favour, ever be in the good books of that adorable (deity) !

- (7) Ūcchociṣā sahasasputra<sup>6</sup> stutāḥ  
 Bṛhād váyaḥ śaśamānéṣu dhehi /  
 Revád Agne Viśvāmitreṣu sám yóḥ  
 Marmṛjmā te tanvám bhūri krtvaḥ //  
 (Seer Kata) III 18.4.

*Translation—*

Arise, O son of strength, as you are praised. Confer abundant food and wealth upon us, the Viśvāmitras who praise you. Grant us exemption from sickness and danger. We shall, O Energiser Agni, sprinkle your person profusely (with ghee, butter, milk etc.).

- (8) Prásūto bhakṣām akaram carāvāpi  
 Stómam cemām prathamāḥ sūrīr únmrje /  
 Suté sāténa yádyāgaman vām  
 Práti Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni dāme // X 167.4.

*Translation—*

Inspired by you, I have prepared the food with the caru (also), and as chief worshipper, I fashion this hymn of praise. (Indra replies) Yes, O Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, as the Soma is being pressed in your sacrificial home, I will come with gifts (then, you will offer me the hymn).

The above references are adequate enough to give us a sketch of the sage Viśvāmitra of the R̥gveda. He is a great ṛṣi, god's favourite and wonder-worker. His connection with Sudās, the Bhojas and the Bharatas has been expressed. He has the co-operation and regard of other priests, Jamadagni, Aṅgirasas and the Maruts. His was the leading part as priest at a thousand-offer-sacrifice (III 53.7). He wielded great influence as he made heaven and earth extol Indra and was confident that his prayer to that Deity would ensure protection to his disciples the Bharatas. He is not less efficient in composing beautiful hymns, hearing which the gods, specially Indra, would shower bounty upon him and his followers. Finally, his descendants, the Viśvāmitras, have kept up the great tradition set up by him. They continue to be Indra's favourites, for one of them invokes Indra as a Kauśika (I 10.11). As the seer Reṇu says, the Viśvāmitras always enjoy the favours of Indra.

6. The pada-pāṭha divides this into two words sahasaḥ and putra, but both have last accent apparently on account of "āmantritasya ca" (Pāṇini VIII 1.19), though 'sahasah' being in the genitive cannot come under that rule. The sarvānudātta will apply to it only if it is regarded as one with 'putra.' Could it be one word like Vācaspati ?

The wonderful achievement of Viśvāmitra, referred to above (III 53.9), is the subject of an entire hymn *viz.* III. 33. It is in the shape of a dialogue between Viśvāmitra and the Rivers, at the confluence of the Vipāś and Śutudri (Beas and Sutlej). The sage prays to the Rivers to become fordable for him and his royal patron Sudās and his retinue. The Rivers feel flattered of course by his prayer, but do not comply because they have had to obey a higher Power. But Viśvāmitra's repeated appeal in fulsome words moves them in the end to oblige him.

RV III 53 is an important hymn giving us the personal history of Viśvāmitra in another episode *viz.* the conduct of the Horse-sacrifice (aśvamedha) on behalf of the Bharatas. This part of the hymn constitutes very good poetry. Viśvāmitra entreats Indra to stay at the sacrifice, not to go away : entreats him as a son entreats the father by holding the skirts of his garment. Then he calls upon the Adhvaryu to join in the reception, commends the soma-offer through the favourite liaison Agni, feels much gratified at his officiating at the Aśvamedha ; the Bhojas, the Aṅgirasas and the Maruts honour him. He then draws inspiration through his earlier deeds of glory, *viz.* the crossing of the Rivers and helping Sudās's sacrifice whereby he elevated himself in the estimation of Indra. And he further encourages the Kuśikas to praise more and drink more along with the great gods. Surely, the wielder of the thunderbolt, Indra, to whom the Viśvāmitras have offered praise, will make them affluent. In stanza 14, the great sage switches on to a different strain, as is not unnatural for a man in power for the time being. It is a famous verse, which has drawn the attention of scholars<sup>7</sup> especially regarding Vedic geography—

Kim te kṛṇvanti Kīkaṭeṣu gāvo  
Nāśīram duhré ná tapanti gharmām /  
Ā no bhara prāmagandasya védo  
Naicāśākhām maghavan randhayā naḥ // III 53.14.

*Translation—*

What will the cattle do for you in the Kikaṭa country ? They do not draw milk for preparing the soma, nor do they heat the 'gharma' (a sacrificial vessel) with milk in it. Bring us the wealth of Pramaganda as well as the holdings of the Nicaśākha.

It is not impossible that there is some sarcasm behind this utterance of Viśvāmitra directed against his enemies. It is the business of Indra to go to any person that praises, here Indra is dissuaded from such a solicitude : what will they do for you in a damned, unmentionable, (Kikaṭa is a harsh enough name, by the way) out of the way place, those cattle (gāvaḥ in the sense of paśu) *i.e.* barbarous people ? They make no offering, perform no rite. They are usurers and of low birth. Carry away their wealth for us, O Indra. Such is the venom that Viśvāmitra is capable of pouring against the enemy.

<sup>7</sup> See " Kikaṭa in RK-Samhitā " by K. C. Chattopadhyaya, Allahabad, in the Woolner Commemoration Volume, Lahore. Stating all previous conclusions on the subject Dr. Chattopadhyaya says Kikaṭa is Kurukṣetra and not Magadha as some other scholars have said. *cf.* VI I p. 159.



The next two verses of the hymn (III 53.15-16) are indicative of Viśvāmitra's discomfiture on one occasion. Viśvāmitra became a victim of unconsciousness (*amati*); then the *Sasarparī* (trumpet-like sound) given out by Jamadagni restored him. *Sasarparī* put new life into Viśvāmitra.

The last four verses of the hymn are the notorious *Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ* alleged to be imprecations against Vasiṣṭha. Durgācārya, being a *Kāpiṣṭhala Vāsiṣṭha*, refuses to comment on them (com. Nir. IV 14.2). In point of fact, these are expressions of hatred and raillery against an enemy in general; he is not specified as this or that person. The learned people never care to ridicule the ignorant. Surely people would not put forward an ass to compete with a horse. "May he who hates us be downfallen and may his vital breath abandon him whom we hate." Still worse, he 'heats (the enemy) like an axe and cuts him like a *Śimbala* tree'; (the enemy) 'vomits foam like a seething and overboiling cauldron.'<sup>8</sup>

#### (B) VASIṢṬHA

The word Vasiṣṭha has been used in the *Ṛgveda* no less than fifty times. On a few occasions only (II 9.1, VII 1.8, X 15.8, 95.17) it is used as an adjective meaning best, excellent (*vasumattama*, *vāsayitṛtama*). The other references are sufficient to present a concrete sketch of the personality of Vasiṣṭha and the achievements of himself and his followers. The greatest deed of Vasiṣṭha is the success which he brought to Sudās in the famous Battle of the Ten Kings (*Dāśarājña*) (VII 18; 33), on which occasion, he also, like Viśvāmitra, persuaded the River *Paruṣṇī* to leave way to his disciple Sudās. Vasiṣṭha became the family priest of the *Bharatas* and the people of the *Ṛtsus* prospered (VII 33.6). He was able to lure Indra away from the Soma drink at *Pāśadyumna's* sacrifice, to the sacrifice which he himself was conducting (VII 33.2). He was equally the favourite of other gods. The *Aśvins* helped him out of a fix, though the occasion is not specified (I 112.9). *Varuṇa* gave him a lift on his ship (VII 88.3 and 4). The birth of the sage Vasiṣṭha has been stated, but unfortunately, not in clear terms (VII 33.10-14); he was born of the *Apsaras Urvaśī* by *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* at a sacrifice. *Sāyaṇa* believes in the repeated births of Vasiṣṭha (VII 33.9).

Professor Velankar<sup>9</sup> has pointed out, in an admirable article, how in each "Family-book" (*maṇḍala*), certain hymns can be marked out as 'family-hymns' i.e. hymns which describe the family history and glory of the seer of the *maṇḍala*. This invests the poetry of the *Ṛgveda* with a stamp of concreteness and realism. A hymn of praise to a god, whom we cannot see, would otherwise, be airy nothing.

8. JUB (1935) "Hymns to Indra by the Viśvāmitras" Tr. with annotations by Prof. H. D. Velankar. Arts. pp. 42-43. The notes are copious and provide a rare advantage to the student of knowing through them the opinions expressed by the celebrated German interpreters of the Veda like Pischel, Geldner and Oldenberg.

9. JBBRAS 1942, pp. 1-22. "Family-hymns in the Family-maṇḍalas" by Prof. H. D. Velankar. They are RV III 33 and 53, IV 18, V 40, VI 47, VII 18.33. No family hymn is yet traced in the II (*Grtsamada*) *Maṇḍala*. According to Geldner (cited by Prof. Velankar), only III 53, VI 47, and VII 33 were pointed out as family hymns.

Now it is possible to get a brief, yet clear enough, sketch of some of the great Vedic personalities. The history and geography of Vedic India glimmer here and there, lighting up at least a few patches of time and space. The history of the sages, for instance, can be traced to two to three generations if not more. Thus among the Viśvāmitras we can trace three : Viśvāmitra-Madhucchandasa-Jetā, Viśvāmitra-Kata-Utkila. So among the Vasiṣṭhas : Vasiṣṭha-Śakti-Parāśara etc. Even so the great rivers of the Punjab and Madhyadeśa. Peoples and principalities like the Bharatas, the Trtsus, the Purus, the Pañcajanas and the Kīkaṣas etc. have a historical reality about them. Yet we are warned not to suppose that these family-hymns were made to design. They are but accidental and reflect what was in vogue in Vedic society—*viz.* that each family cherished the glory of its ancestors.

The family-hymns of the Vasiṣṭhas are pointed out to be two, *i.e.* VII 18 and 33. The main theme of the eighteenth hymn is the Battle of the Ten Kings which is described in detail. There does not seem to be much action or *melee* in the Battle. King Sudās had after all a small army and he was almost to be routed as the enemy hosts hemmed in on three sides, with the powerful Paruṣṇi threatening the rear. The alternative was either to fight with the enemy straight and take the consequences or to perish in the river stream. At this crucial moment Vasiṣṭha's prayer to Indra brought about Sudās's success. By his persuasive hymns (which are not given as in the case of Viśvāmitra) the River Paruṣṇi rendered herself shallow enough for the armies to cross over and by the time the enemies pursued, the stream swelled to its original volume and velocity so that the rank and file of the enemy were simply washed down marking several furrows on the surface of the stream. The few that succeeded in swimming across were easily destroyed by Sudās. The description which is highly poetic, with subtle irony to embellish it may be illustrated, by a few verses quoted below.<sup>10</sup>

Ārṇāmsi cit paprathānā Sudāsa  
 Īndro gādhānyakṛṇot supārā /  
 Śārdhantam Śimyuṁ ucāthasya nāvyaḥ  
 Śāpam sīndhūnām akrṇod āśastiḥ // VII 18.5.

“Indra made even the vastly flowing waters of (the Paruṣṇi) shallow and easily fordable to King Sudās. He who is fit to be honoured by our hymn made the arrogant Śimyu and his imprecations the floating dirt (on the surface) of the River.”

Puroḷā it Turvāśo yāksur āsīt  
 Rāyē mātsyāśo nīsitā āpīva /  
 Śruṣṭīm cakrur Bhṛḡavo Druhyāvaś ca  
 Sākhā sākhāyam atarad viṣūcoḥ // -6

“Turvāśa, the sacrificer, himself became the cake-offering ; and so were also the Matsyas, who thought as if they were specially fitted for receiving wealth ! The

Bhr̥gus and the Druhyus followed them obediently ! In (each of) the two adjacent streams of the fleeing foes, a friend did help another friend (to save his life) ! ”<sup>11</sup>

Durādhyo Áditim sreváyanto  
'cetáso ví jagrbhre Páruṣṇim /  
Mahnávivyak pr̥thivím pátyamānaḥ  
Paśúṣkavír aśayaccāyamānaḥ // -8

“ Those ignorant fools of impious thoughts divided the stream of the Paruṣṇi, trying to make the freely moving river go astray ! (And then) the poet (of the enemy) lay down as a victim (following the cake-offering), looking steadfastly (because dead !) and stretched himself over the earth in full length, thus mastering it ! ”<sup>12</sup>

Iyúr ártham ná nyarthám Páruṣṇim  
Áśús canéd abhipitvám jagāma /  
Sudāsa Índras sutúka amitrān  
Árandhayan mánuse vádhrivācaḥ // -9

“ They went to the Paruṣṇi to meet with a disaster like one who goes to meet a goal. Even the swift (horse) could not reach the resting-place, *i.e.* the camp. For the sake of Sudās, Indra subdued the gracefully (?) retreating enemies of impotent words among men.”

Iyúr gávo ná yávasād ágopāḥ  
Yathākrtām abhí mitrām citāsaḥ /  
Pṛṣnigāvaḥ pṛṣninipreṣitāsaḥ  
Śruṣṭīm cakrur niyúto rántayaś ca // -10

“ They went away like cows without a keeper, (when driven out) from the pasture, collecting themselves around a friend whom they could possibly secure ; they were sent down to the earth (by Indra) to possess cows in the form of the earth ! their horses and enjoyments obediently followed them there ! ”

Ékam ca yó vimśatim ca śravasyá  
Vaikarṇāyor jánān rájā nyástah /  
Dasmó ná sádman ní śísāti barhíḥ  
Śúraḥ sárgam akr̥nod Índra eṣām // -11

11. The whole trend is ironical, cruelly, as Prof. Velankar puts it. Prof. Velankar's interpretation is quite original. Although differing totally from Sāyaṇa whose com. here, to be frank, cannot help us to get a concrete and cogent picture of the fight, the Professor has hit off a brilliant idea by taking puroḷāḥ in the sense of puroḷāśa (puroḍāśa), ‘cake-offering.’ (puroḷāḥ purogāmī puroḍātā vā : Sāyaṇa !). Puroḷāḥ is, perhaps, to be taken as a Nairukta abbreviation of puroḍāśa. Helplessly does Wilson remark : ‘The legend, such as it is, is very obscurely told.’ (RV Tr. Vol. 4, p. 57 n2)

12. The last line of the verse is, again, ironical. Prof. Velankar takes cāyamāna as an adjective while Sāyaṇa considers it a patronymic. The word occurs twice in the Bharadvāja Maṇḍala (VI 27.5 and 8) referring to Abhyāvartin, a king of that name. In that context, Prof. Velankar construes the word as a patronymic, “Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna.” *Vide* JUB Sep. 1941 (Vol. X, part 2) pp. 97 and 109. cf. VI I p. 260.

“ King (Sudās) cut up his enemies like a lovely priest who cuts down the grass for a sacrificial seat, when he overthrew the 21 peoples of the two Vikarṇas with a desire for fame. Brave Indra brought about their flight.”

Ví sadyó víśvā dṛmhitānyeṣām  
 Índraḥ púras sáhasā saptá dardaḥ /  
 Vyānavasya Tṛtsave gáyam bhāk  
 Jēśma Pūrúm vidátthe mṛdhrāvācam // -13

“ In a moment did Indra batter down with force all the seven forts and other strong places of these *i.e.* the enemies. He gave away the wealth of the Anu prince to the Tṛtsu priest; we have conquered the Pūru prince who had used insolent words in the sacrificial assembly.”

Ní gavyávó'navo Druhyávaś ca  
 Ṣaṣṭiḥ śatá suṣupuh śaṭ sahasrā /  
 Ṣaṣṭir vírāso ádhi śaḍ duvoyú  
 Vísvéd Índrasya víriā kṛtāni // -14

“ The loot-seeking Anus and the Druhyus numbering sixty hundred and six thousand respectively, lay down in eternal slumber. (But) the brave warriors (on our side) were (only) sixty and six more, (who did the same) to render service (to Indra). Even all these brave deeds were the performances of Indra.”

Ardhám vírāśya śṛtapám animdrám  
 Pārā sárdhantam nunude abhí kṣám /  
 Índro manyúm manyumío mimāya  
 Bhejé pathó vartaním pátyamānaḥ // -16

“ King Sudās drove down to the ground that enemy who was only a half warrior, who drank the sacrificial food himself, who had no faith in Indra and who was an arrogant person. Indra destroyed the fury of him, who struck with fury. He distributed paths (to men), being the Lord of the Way.”

Imám naro marutaḥ saścatānu  
 Dívodāsam ná pitāram Sudāśaḥ /  
 Aviṣṭānā Paijavanāśya kētam  
 Dūṇāśam kṣatrām ajāram duvoyú // -25

“ Oh, valiant Maruts wait upon this king as you did upon Divodāsa, the ancestor of Sudās. In a helpful manner, favour the heart's desire of Paijavana and also his sovereign rule which is indestructible and never grows old.”

The other family hymn,<sup>13</sup> VII 33, sings the glory of the Vasiṣṭhas in general and also refers to the birth of the patriarch in particular: The opening verse is impressive—

Śvityāñco mā dakṣiṇatāskapardāḥ  
 Dhiyamjinvāso abhí hí pramandúḥ /  
 Uttiṣṭhan voce pári barhiṣo nṛṇ  
 ná me dūrād ávitave Vasiṣṭhāḥ // VII 33.1.

13. It appears quite meet to call this a family hymn, for it is borne out by the ṛṣi and devatā thereof. Of the first nine verses, Vasiṣṭha is the Ṛṣi, the sons are the devatā, for the remaining six, he is the deity and the sons are the Ṛṣis. It is also regarded as a samvāda between Indra and Vasiṣṭha. cf. Sarvā. (ed. Macdonell, p. 25) Śvityāñcaḥ ṣaḷūnā samstavo Vasiṣṭhasya saputrasya Indreṇa vā samvādaḥ /

“The white-robed sages with the knot of their hair to the right have greatly delighted me by stirring up my heart. (When I heard their hymn) I got up from my grass-seat and said to the men around : “The Vasiṣṭhas are not to be favoured by me from a distance.”

Dūrād Índram anayannā suténa  
Tiró Vaiśantám áti pántam ugrám /  
Pāśadyumnasya Vāyatāsyā sómāt  
Sutād Índro avṛṇītā Vasiṣṭhān // -2

“They brought Indra to themselves from afar by means of their pressed juice, away from Vaiśanta and in spite of the fierce Pānta!<sup>14</sup> (Similarly) Indra chose his Vasiṣṭhas (and went to them), leaving aside even the pressed juice of Pāśadyumna Vāyata.”

Evén nú kam síndhum ebhis tatāra  
Evén nú kam Bhedám ebhir jaghāna /  
Evén nú kam Dāśarājñé Sudāsam  
Prāvad Índro bráhmaṇā vo Vasiṣṭhāḥ // -3

“Thus did he cross the river Paruṣṇī with them ; thus did he kill Bheda with them. Thus indeed did Indra save Sudās in the Dāśarājña war owing to your hymn, oh Vasiṣṭhas.”

Úd dyāmivét tṛṣṇájo nāthitāsaḥ  
Ádihayur Dāśarājñé vṛtāsaḥ /  
Vasiṣṭhasya stuvatā Índro ásrot  
Urúm Tṛtsubhyo akṛṇod u lokám // -5

“(The Tṛtsus) when surrounded and distressed in the Dāśarājña war looked up (to Indra for help), as thirsty men look up to the heaven (for rain). Indra heard while Vasiṣṭha was praising him and gave wide enough space to the Tṛtsus.”

Daṇḍá ivéd goájanāsa āsan  
Páricchinnā Bharatā arbhakāsaḥ /  
Ábhavac ca puractā Vasiṣṭha  
Ád ít Tṛtsūnām víso aprathanta // -6

“The Bharatas were very few and limited like the sticks used for driving the cows. But as soon as Vasiṣṭha became their leader immediately then the followers of the Tṛtsus became vast and unlimited.”

Sūryasyeva vakṣátho jyótir eṣām  
Samudrásyeva mahimā gabhírāḥ /  
Vátasyeva prajavó nānyéna  
Stómo Vasiṣṭhā ánvetaive vaḥ // -8

14. Prof. Velankar takes Vaiśanta and Pānta as proper names. Sāyaṇa—“Veśantaḥ palvalam / Atra veśantaśabdēna somādhāraś camaso lakṣyate / tatstham somam pāntam pibantam ugram udgūrṇam Indram / ” We are pleased that Prof. Velankar, however, suggests an alternative translation—“Perhaps, ‘They brought the fierce Indra from afar, away from and in spite of the tubful drink ’ Vide note on p. 20 JBBRAS (1942).”

“ Their light (of glory) is like the growing splendour of the sun, their greatness is vast like that of the ocean.<sup>15</sup> Your hymn is inimitable by others like the swiftness of Wind, Oh Vasiṣṭhas.”

Tá inniṇyám hṛdayasya praketaśh  
Sahásravalśam abhí sám caranti /  
Yaména tatám paridhím váyantah  
Apsarása úpa sedur Vásiṣṭhāh // -9

“ They alone move about fearlessly owing to the knowledge of their heart, in the secret of a thousand branches. Intending to weave that (secret) garment, first woven by Yama, the Vasiṣṭhas approached the celestial nymph (for birth).”

Vidyúto jyótiḥ pári sañjīhānam  
Mitrāvāruṇā yád āpaśyatām tvā /  
Tát te jánmotaikam Vasiṣṭha  
Agástyo yát tvā viśá ājabhāra // -10

“ That was your one birth, Oh Vasiṣṭha, when Mitra and Varuṇa saw you leaving your own luminous body of lightning (for being born as their son from Urvaśi). (And) when Agastya brought you to the human beings, (that was your second birth).

Utási Maitrāvaruṇó Vasiṣṭho-  
rváśyā brahman mánasó'dhi jātāh /  
Drapsám skannám bráhmaṇā daívyena  
Vísve devāh púṣkare tvādadanta // -11

“ And indeed you are the son of Mitrāvaruṇā, Oh Vasiṣṭha, born from Urvaśi, owing to their ardent love for her. The Vísve Devas held their dropped semen in a lotus with the help of a celestial hymn.”

Sá praketa ubháyasya pravidvánt-  
Sahásradāna utá vā sádānah /  
Yaména tatám paridhím vayiśyān  
Apsarásaḥ pári jajñe Vásiṣṭhaḥ // -12

“ That Vasiṣṭha, well acquainted with both (gods and men); who is an appreciative giver of a thousand gifts or, even a continual giver of gifts, was born from the nymph, intending to weave the garment<sup>16</sup> first woven by Yama.”

Satré hajātáviṣitá námobhiḥ  
Kumbhé rétas siśicatuḥ samānām /  
Táto ha Mána údiyāya mádhyāt  
Táto jātám ṛṣim āhur Vásiṣṭham // -13

15. cf. Samudra iva gāmbhīrye, dhairyena himavān iva : (Rām. I 1). The string of similes is impressive.

16. Compare the ancient Greek idea that the three Fatal Sisters weave the web of LIFE. They are : Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. They lived in the deep abyss of Demogorgon ‘with unwearied fingers drawing out the threads of life.’ One held the spindle or distaff, the second drew out the thread and the third cut it off. Brewer : Reader's Handbook of famous names in fiction, Allusions etc. (1934).

“ Being impelled by the prayers (of the *Viśve Devas*), they (*i.e.* *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*) visited their sacrifice and dropped their semen together in a jar (at the sight of *Urvaśī*). From the middle of it arose *Māna*. They call the sage *Vasiṣṭha* who was born from that (semen).”

Ukthabhṛtam Sāmbhṛtam bibharti  
Grāvāṇam bibhṛat prā vadātyāgre /  
Ūpainam ādhvam sumanasyāmānā  
Ā vo gacchāti pratṛdo Vāsiṣṭhaḥ // -14

“ He supports the bringers of *Uktha* and the *Sāman*. Holding the press-stone, he always speaks with authority in front of all. Wait upon him with a delighted mind, here comes *Vasiṣṭha* to you, oh descendents of *Pratṛd*.”

The *Dāśarājña* war is described again in the 83rd hymn which is a prayer to the dual divinity *Indrā-Varuṇa*. It is described as a past event when *Indra* and *Varuṇa* jointly gave strength to *Sudās* to resist the onslaught of the enemies and when they directly also rendered the enemy powerless (vv 6-8).

Dāśarājñé páriyattāya viśvātaḥ  
Sudāsa Indrā-Varuṇāvaśikṣatam /  
Śvityāñco yātra nāmasā kapardīno  
Dhiyā dhīvanto āsapanta Tṛtsavaḥ // VII 83-8

“ In the Battle of the Ten Kings, *Sudās* was overwhelmed by the enemy on all sides. The white-complexioned *Tṛtsus* supported him with rites and prayers. (At such a trying time), both of you taught *Sudās* (to resist the attack).”

But the immediate concern as indicated by vv 1-5 seems to be to face other enemies. The *Dāśarājña* war marks a former victory. *Sudās* had had to contend with enemies from within and without continuously. In fact the 5th verse appears to be a prayer just before the day of battle :

Índrā-Varuṇāv abhyá tapanti  
Māghānyaryó vanúṣām árātayaḥ /  
Yuvám hí vásva ubháyasya rájathah  
Ādha smā no'vatam párye diví // -5

“ The fierce weapons of the enemy distress me, Oh *Indra* and *Varuṇa*, as also the more malignant among my foes. You reign supreme over both fortunes (of Earth and Heaven). Therefore, pray, do protect us on the day of battle.”

The efficacy of the prayers and consequent popularity of the *Vasiṣṭhas* gave rise, alongside, to bitter jealousy. Hence we find throughout the *maṇḍala* frequent appeals to the gods for protection from the malignant attacks of the enemy. It is often the fate of the gentle and the noble folk to suffer at the hands of back-biters. The latter have no face nor ground to attack openly ; but are extremely jealous of the good man's goodness. So the beast in them plays behind the back. Similar was the case with *Vasiṣṭha*. Apart from the foreign enemies whom his tribe had to meet almost as daily occupation in their new settlements, there must

have been a good deal of stabbing from behind ; so much so that Vasiṣṭha prays Indra and Varuṇa to destroy the enemy, be he a Dāsa or an Ārya.<sup>17</sup>

In this connection we are led to believe that it is not mere prayer to the gods, or offering at a sacrifice, or even the flourish of weapons that led the chieftains to victory. All these straightforward efforts were implemented if not superseded by black magic, charms and spells. A variety of fiends, called Rākṣasas or Yātudhānas, enter the arena and play havoc. It is said they would be employed—even as they employ mercenaries nowadays—by force of magical spells by the contending parties to kill the enemy. Thus it is said, was brought about, the death of Vasiṣṭha's son Śakti,<sup>18</sup> who, at the instigation (as is imagined) of Viśvāmitra was thrown into a forest-fire by the fiends employed by the sons of Sudās. Though a later account, we may cite the incident of King Kalmāṣapāda becoming a Rākṣasa himself to devour the hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha.<sup>19</sup> Vasiṣṭha's person proved no exception to the attack of sorcery. Viśvāmitra commanded the river Sarasvati to wash Vasiṣṭha down her stream to him so that he could kill him. She obeyed but made the current too quick for Viśvāmitra to grapple the victim. Vasiṣṭha was at the same time saved. But Viśvāmitra cursed the river to run blood for a year whence she became the Aruṇā (" Red River ").<sup>20</sup> It must be such extensive recourse to witchcraft that prompted Vasiṣṭha to invoke the protection of the dual gods Indrā-Soma against the Yātudhānas ; the hymn is commonly designated as Rakṣoghnasūkta (VII 104).

Yó mā pákena mánasā cárantam  
Abhicāṣṭe áṇṛtebhir vácobhiḥ /  
Ápa iva káśínā sángrbhītāḥ  
Ásannastvāsata Indra vaktá // VII 104.8

"May he who with false allegations maligns me, who is of a pure mind, may such a speaker of falsehood, Oh Indra, cease to be, like water grasped in the fist." Or, again,

Yé pákaśamsám vihářanta évaiḥ  
Yé vā bhadráṁ dūṣáyanti svadhábhīḥ /  
Áhaye vā tán pradádātu Sómah  
Á vā dadhātu Nírṛter upásthe // -9

'May Soma give to the serpent or consign to the lap of Nirṛti, those who harass me with false accusations and those who vilify spitefully all that is good in me.'

It is painful to hear curses as much as to pronounce them, how much more should the great Vasiṣṭha have been harassed that he is driven to burst forth with

17. Dāsā ca vṛtrā hatam āryāṇi ca (VII 83.1c)

18. *Vide* Sarvā. p. 130 Śakti was killed by the Viśvāmitras according to the JB (JAOS 18.47). *cf.* VI II 849.

19. *cf.* Sāyana on VII 104.12, Wilson's note on p. 207 of his Translation, Vol. 4. MBh. I 176.6 f. Rām. 3.66.8.

20. MBh IX 42.1 f. See also Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 188.



endless curses upon the evil-doer and the enemy. Here is a sample of his reaction to the fiendish spirits called Yātus :

Ūlūkayātum śuśulūkayātum  
Jahí śváyātum utá kókayātum /  
Suparnáyātum utá gṛdhráyātum  
Dṛṣádeva prá mṛṇa rákṣa Indra // -22

“Destroy the evil spirits whether they are in the form of owls big and small, in the form of a dog or a wolf, or an eagle, or a vulture, pound the demon, O Indra, as with a boulder.”

Índra jahí púmāmsam yātudhānam  
Utá stríyam māyáyā śásadānām /  
Vigrivāso mūradevā ṛdantu  
Má té dṛśantśúrīyam uccárantam // -24

“Put down, O Indra, whether it is a man or a woman, who as an evil spirit does mischief by deceit. Let these bloodthirsty demons perish with their heads cut off, so that they may not live to see the rising sun.”

Affecting his personal history, we find Vasiṣṭha caught in a couple of amusing if not compromising situations. The 55th hymn is called prasvāpinyupaniṣat, one that sends all to sleep. The contents may be summarised as follows :—

The Seer addresses the attacking dog,<sup>21</sup> ‘On brindled dog, when you open your mouth to bark, there do flash like shining weapons, your teeth through the jaws. Desist and sleep soundly. Or pursue a thief or a robber ; why do you bother us who are praisers of Indra ? May you tear asunder the pig, and the pig tear you in retaliation ; why do you bother us who are praisers of Indra ?’ Then he pronounces a spell as it were : “Let the mother sleep, let the father sleep, let the dog sleep and the lord of the house as well ; let all the relations sleep and so the men round about. Whoever sits, moves about or sees us, the eyes of all those shall we close, so as to make them as motionless as this mansion. With the thousand rays does the Great Benefactor (Sun) rise from amidst yonder sea. With his gracious help shall we send all people to sleep. Those who lie in the vestibule or in the carriages or those ladies who lie on mattresses, the ladies of auspicious fragrance—all these shall we send to sound sleep.” Such an encounter with a canine sentinel and such occasion to put the whole life of a mansion into deep slumber must mean a peculiar situation for Vasiṣṭha !

21. RV VII 55.2-8. Yádarjuna Sārameya datāḥ piśaṅga yáccḥase / Viva bhrājanta ṛṣṭāya ūpa śrákveṣu bāpsato ní śu svapa // Stenām rāya Sārameya tāskaram vā punassara / Stotṛn Índrasya rāyasi kim asmān ducchunāyase ní śu svapa // Tvām sūkarāya dardḥi táva dardartu sūkarāḥ / Stotṛn Índrasya rāyasi kim asmān ducchunāyase ní śu svapa // Sástu mātā sástu pitā sástu śvā sástu viśpátīḥ / Sasántu sárve jñātāyaḥ sástvayām abhito jānaḥ // Yá áste yás ca cárati yás ca paśyáti no jānaḥ / Tésām sám hanmo akṣāni yáthedām harmyām tátāḥ // Sahásraśrṅgo vṛṣabhó yás samudrād udācarat / Ténā sahasyenā vayām ní jánāntsvāpayāmasi // Proṣṭheśayā vahyeśayā nārīr yās talpaśivariḥ / Strīyo yāḥ pūnyagandhās tās sárvasvāpayāmasi //

But what a revelation to know that it was all in a dream ! The Brhaddevatā relates the story<sup>22</sup>—“ Once during night, Vasiṣṭha in a dream entered Varuṇa’s house. Then came the watch-dog to attack him. Barking and rushing upon him, he was trying to bite him. Vasiṣṭha subdued him with a couple of verses and sent him to sleep ; even so did Vasiṣṭha cause all Varuṇa’s establishment to sleep too.” The same is described in another setting<sup>23</sup> which is more funny.

“ That these constitute a lullaby is related in stories. Once upon a time Vasiṣṭha was thirsty and hankering for food, having had to starve for three nights. On the fourth night, he decided to steal and came to Varuṇa’s house. In order to lull the sentry and the hounds to sleep while he entered the commissariat, Vasiṣṭha saw and recited these seven ṛks commencing with ‘Yād Arjuna’ .”

The 86th is a sort of penitential hymn praying to God Varuṇa to absolve the worshipper of all sin. The expressions are such as to make us think that the seer *i.e.* Vasiṣṭha himself had committed great sin and is therefore begging Varuṇa’s mercy.

2. “ Do I say this to my own soul ? How can I get unto Varuṇa ? Will he accept my offering without displeasure ? When shall I, with a quiet mind, see him propitiated ?

3. I ask, O Varuṇa, wishing to know this my sin. I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same. Varuṇa it is who is angry with thee.

4. Was it an old sin, O Varuṇa, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend, who always praises thee ? Tell me, thou unconquerable lord, and I will quickly turn to thee with praise freed from sin.

5. Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we committed with our own bodies. Release Vasiṣṭha, O King, like a thief who has feasted on stolen cattle, release him like a calf from the rope.

6. It was not our own doing, O Varuṇa, it was necessity an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is near to mislead the young ; even sleep brings unrighteousness.

22. BD VI 11-13. Varuṇasya ḡhān rātrau Vasiṣṭhaḥ svapnam ācaran / Praviveśātha tam tatra śvā nadann abhyavartata // Krandantam sārameyam tam dhāvantam daṣṭum udyatam / Yadarjuneti ca dvābhyām sāntvayitvā pyasūṣupat // Evam prasvāpayāmāsa janam anyam ca Vāruṇam / iti. Quoted by Sāyana, introducing the hymn.

23. Saḍguruśiṣya on Sarvā. ed. Macdonell, p. 133.

Āsām prasvāpīnītvam tu kathāsu parikalpyate /  
Vasiṣṭhas tṛṣito’nnārthī trirātrālabdhabhojanah /  
Catūrtha rātrau cauryārtham Vāruṇam ḡham etya tu /  
Koṣṭhāgārapravesāya pālakaśvādisuptaye /  
Yadarjunādi saptarcaṃ dadarśa ca jajāpa ca //

The text of the Sarvā. bears no indication (p. 26)—

8. O Lord, Varuṇa, may this song go well to thy heart ! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring ! Protect us, O gods, always with your blessings.”<sup>24</sup>

Reflecting upon these verses, it is not necessary to suppose that Vasiṣṭha himself committed all sins contemplated, for instance, in the sixth stanza above. The whole hymn is like an “aparādha-kṣamāpaṇa-stotra,” praying for forgiveness of sins which are apt to be committed by man ; a repetition of the hymn every day by the eager worshipper also ensures desisting from committing the sins specified. In other words, it exerts a kind of prophylactic influence on the mind of the worshipper. Vasiṣṭha perhaps designed this hymn for the benefit of his numerous followers. The last stanza signifies a typical finish for such hymns.

With a little stretch of imagination one thinks that Vasiṣṭha had a strange experience of the sea ; perhaps a shipwreck. Father Varuṇa should, of course, save him.

‘ Apām mādhye tasthivāmsam tṛṣṇāvidajjaritāram /  
Mṛṣā sukṣatra mṛlāya //<sup>25</sup>

“Thirst has possessed me, thy worshipper in the midst of the waters, grant me happiness, O Lord of Wealth, grant me happiness.”

Evidently the seer longs for peace and contentment, being caught in the midst of worldly greed. He is at sea, as the English idiom has it. The reference has to be viewed more philosophically than literally. But from another context, however, Vasiṣṭha’s sea-voyage seems to be a certainty. (RV VII 88.3-4). The Seer sings :

“Boarding the ship, when Varuṇa and I entered the mid-ocean and floated with other vessels on water we indeed very much enjoyed the delightful rocking of the ship.

“Amīvalhāstau vāstospatyādyā gāyatrī śeṣātryupariṣṭād bṛhatyādayo’nuṣṭubhaḥ prasvāpīna upaniṣat” /

24. RV VII 86. Utā svāyā tanvā 3 sām vade tāt kadā nvántārvāruṇe bhuvāni / kim me havyām āhr̥ṇāno juṣeta kadā mṛṣikām sumānā abhi khyam // 2

Pr̥ché tād éno Varuṇa didṛkṣūpo emi cikitūso vip̥ccham / Samānām inme kavāyasa cidāhur ayām ha tūbhyam Vāruṇo hr̥ṇite // 3

Kim āga āṣa Varuṇa jyēṣṭham yāt stotāram jighāmsasi sakhāyam / Prā tánme voco dūlabha svadhāvó’va tvānenā nāmasā turā iyām // 5

Áva dr̥ghāni pitryā sṛjā nó’va yā vayām cakṛmā tanúbhiḥ / Áva rājan paśut̥pam ná tāyūm sṛjā vatsām ná dāmno Vasiṣṭham // 5

Nā sá svó dākṣo Varuṇa dhr̥utīh sá sūrā manyúr vibhídako ácittīh / ásti jyāyān káníyasa uparé svāpnas canéd ántasya prayotā // 6

Ayām sú tūbhyam Varuṇa svadhāvo hṛdi stóma úpaśritaś cidastu / Śām naḥ kṣéme sámū yóge no astu yūyám pāta svastibhis sādā naḥ // 8

25. RV VII 89.4. Sāyana—apām samudrāṇām udakānām madhye tasthivāmsam sthitavāntam api jaritāram tava stotāram mām tṛṣṇā pipāsā avidat āptavati / Lavaṇotkaṣasya sāmudrajalasya pānānarhatvāt / atas tādṛśam mām mṛṣa sukhaya //

“Varuṇa took the Rṣi Vasiṣṭha on his ship and, with gracious feelings,<sup>26</sup> made him capable of great deeds. Further, the intelligent god, by way of happy time for the minstrel, extended many a dawn into day. (*i.e.* he enabled the sage to spend many happy days on board the ship.”<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, Vasiṣṭha was initiated into the deepest secrets of Existence by Varuṇa, who, in this manner can be said to have exercised a truly paternal care over his own son :

Uvāca me Vāruṇo mēdhirāya  
Triḥ saptā nāmāglnyā bibharti /  
Vidvān padāsya gūhyā nā vocad  
Yugāya vipra úparāya śíkṣan //<sup>28</sup>

“Varuṇa told me who am intelligent the thrice seven names that the Cow (or Speech) bears. The wise and skilful Varuṇa also imparted the secrets of the Supreme world to me, his favourite pupil.”

#### (C) VASIṢṬHA—VIŚVĀMITRA RELATIONSHIP

There has been much conjecture and concoction on this point throughout Sanskrit Literature ; and even in recent opinions expressed. But if the R̥gveda is to be regarded as the basis of our legends and legendary study, it must be acknowledged that there is nothing stated about the mutual relationship of these famous priests of the R̥gvedic Age. RV III 4 and VII 2 are both Āpri-hymns in the respective Maṇḍalas. How curious that verses 8-11, *i.e.* as many as four consecutive stanzas, are identically the same ! In the words of M. Bloomfield, “We should expect diversity there if anywhere.”<sup>29</sup> At worst, the two sages are neither friends nor enemies. One common ground however can be marked out that both befriended the same king, Sudās, at different times. Vasiṣṭha helped Sudās to win the Battle of the Ten Kings. Viśvāmitra also helped Sudās to cross the confluence of Vipās and Śutudrī, the circumstances of this adventure being however uncertain. It is generally believed<sup>30</sup> that Viśvāmitra was ousted from Sudās’ partonage by Vasiṣṭha, whereupon the former set up the confederacy of the ten chieftains against Sudās. But this opinion is questioned ;<sup>31</sup> and a fresh conjecture

26. The Samhitā reads mähobhiḥ, but Sāyaṇa reads āvobhiḥ in the sense of rakṣaṇaiḥ. His authority has however not been traced. Both MM and Poona (Vaidika Saṁsodhana Maṇḍala) Editions have noticed this discrepancy between the text and the commentary.

27. RV VII 88.8-4—Ā yādruhāva Vāruṇaś ca nāvam prā yāt samudrām irāyāva mādhyam / Adhi yād apām snūbhiś cārāva prā preṅkhā iṅkhayāvahai śubhé kām // Vasiṣṭham ha Vāruṇo nāvyaḍhād ṛsim cakāra svāpā mähobhiḥ / Stotāram vipraḥ sudinatvé āhnām yānnū dyāvas tatānan yād Uśasah //

28. RV VII 87.4 padasya utkr̥ṣṭasya sthānasya Brahmalokalakṣaṇasya—Sāyaṇa.

29. Bloomfield, R̥gveda Repetitions, p. 647. Religion of the Veda p. 72. ‘The two books (RV III and VII) share quite a number of other lines (14 common lines in all)’.

30. Cf. VI II, p. 275.

31. See IHQ (June 1930) K. C. Chaṭtopādhyāya on the Dāsārājña Battle pp. 261-64.

put forward that the Bhāradvājas were the family priests of Sudās before either Viśvāmitra or Vasiṣṭha. Viśvāmitra was not responsible for the Legaue of the ten kings. On the other hand it is possible to think that both priests were entertained by Sudās on two different occasions. Whoever the family priest he must, and would, have tolerated the advent of another for temporary service. As the Āryans were confronted with problems of land and living, it is natural that they contracted the enmity of local dwellers. So we can suppose that both priests had their own enemies to contend with. A few expressions are pointed out in RV III 53 and RV VII 18, 33 and 104 to say that they are indirect references to their mutual hatred. But why such a forced surmise? If the enmity were true why does not the Veda say it? There is no harm, for we could, in our time-honoured complacency, regard that also as a chapter in our vast heritage!

## II

### LATER SAMHITĀS

#### 1. *Taittirīya Samhitā*

Viśvāmitra won the abode of Agni by means of the hymn "This is that Agni." —Ayam so'gniriti Viśvāmitrasya sūktam bhavati, etena vai Viśvāmitro'gneḥ priyam dhāmāvarundha, Agnerevaitena priyam dhāmāvarundhe.<sup>32</sup> The context is the preparation of the ground for the Fire (Gārhapatyacayana).

Vasiṣṭha should be chosen as Brahman priest according to III 5.2. "The Ṛṣis could not see Indra face to face; Vasiṣṭha saw him face to face, he said 'Holy lore shall I proclaim to you so that people will be propagated with thee as Purohita; therefore do thou not proclaim me to the other Ṛṣis.' To him he proclaimed these shares in the stoma, therefore people were propagated with Vasiṣṭha as Purohita; therefore a Vasiṣṭha should be chosen as Brahman priest; verily he is propagated."<sup>33</sup>

Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are together mentioned in connection with the Five Layers of Bricks. The sages Vasiṣṭha, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni and Viśvakarman are identified respectively as Prāṇa, Manas, Cakṣus, Śrotra and Vāc (of the sacrifice); they are described as having sprung from the Rathantara, Bṛhat,

32. TS V 2.3.3. Ayam so'gniḥ (RV III 22.1) Sarvā. ascribes the hymn to Gāthī son of Kuśika.

33. Ṛṣayo vā Indram pratyakṣam nāpaśyan tam Vasiṣṭhaḥ pratyakṣam apaśyat so'bravid Brāhmaṇam te vakṣyāmi yathā tvatpurohitāḥ prajāḥ prajāniṣyante'tha metarebhya ṛṣibhyo mā pravoca iti tasmā etāntstomabhāgān abravīt tato Vasiṣṭha purohitāḥ prajāḥ prajāyanta tasmād Vasiṣṭho Brahmā kāryaḥ praiva jāyate (TS III 5.2). Sāyaṇa Tādṛśam Brāhmaṇam śrutvā athānantaram tvam mām itarebhyo mantrānadhikāribhya ṛṣibhyo mā pravocaḥ. But Keith has overlooked the prohibitive mā in his translation. The context demands the prohibitive, in order to establish the special privilege for the Vasiṣṭha. Hence the above translation is given with due correction. (Keith, Veda of the Black Yajus School, Tr. HOS. Vol. 18, p. 279).

Vairūpa, Vairāja, and, Śakvara and Raivata Sāmans.<sup>34</sup> Later after the bricks were duly laid, the text says—

‘ Yāḥ prācis tābhir Vasiṣṭha ārdhnōt, yā dakṣiṇā tābhir Bharadvājo yāḥ praticis tābhir Viśvāmitro yā udicis tābhir Jamadagnir yā ūrdhvās tābhir Viśvakarmā ya evam etāsām ṛddhim vedardhnotyeva ya āsām evam bandhutām veda bandhumān bhavati ya āsām evam kṛptim vada kalpate asmai ya āsām evam āyatanam vedāyatanavān bhavati ya āsām evam pratiṣṭhām veda pratyeva tiṣṭhati //’<sup>35</sup>

“ With those (bricks) put down on the East, Vasiṣṭha prospered, with those on the south Bharadvāja, with those on the west Viśvāmitra, with those on the north Jamadagni, with those above Viśvakarman. He who knows thus the prosperity in these (bricks) prospers ; he who knows thus their relationship becomes rich in relations ; he who knows thus their ordering, (things) go orderly for him ; he who knows thus their abode becomes possessed of an abode ; he who knows thus their support becomes possessed of support.”

This illustrates again the close association of the sages. The phala-śruti is very significant. At all events, it impresses upon the common worshipper the fact that co-operation from all quarters is necessary as exemplified by the great sages of old with regard to the conduct of the sacrifice. It is possible that these sages in particular circumstances did have honest differences, but did not refuse co-operation when required.

We find however but one reference to the rivalry between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra :

Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni Vasiṣṭhenāspardhetā sa  
ctajjamadagnir vihavyam apaśyat tena vai  
Vasiṣṭhasyendriyam vīryam avṛṇta—

Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni had a quarrel with Vasiṣṭha. Jamadagni saw the Vihavya hymn<sup>36</sup> and drew away all the power and strength of the adversary.<sup>37</sup>

34. These identifications are symbolical. One should approach them with faith (śraddhā). The point at issue is the importance that the Taittirīya attaches equally to Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra along with other sages. They are solid bricks on which the edifice of the Vedic sacrifice is built. Whatever the personal relationships of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were, their active association with the sacrifice is a testimony to their unqualified contribution to the general welfare of the community. To illustrate the symbolism just referred to, one extract may be given—“ Ayam puro bhuvas tasya prāṇo bhauvāyano vasantaḥ prāṇāyano gāyatrī vāsanti gāyatriyai gāyatraṁ gāyatrād upāṁśur upāṁśos trivṛt trivṛto Rathantaram Rathantarād Vasiṣṭha ṛṣiḥ prajāpatiḥ grhī-tayā tvayā prāṇam grhṇāmi prajābhyah.” etc. Keith—“ This one in front the existent, his, the existent's breath ; spring born of the breath, the Gāyatri born of the spring, from the Gāyatri the Gāyatra (Sāman), from the Gāyatra the Upāṁśu (cup) ; from the Upāṁśu the Trivṛt (stoma), from the Trivṛt the Rathantara, from the Rathantara Vasiṣṭha the Ṛṣi. With thee taken by Prajāpati, I take breath for offspring”.

35. TS V 2.10.5-6 Keith's translation, p. 45 f.

36. RV X 128.1 Mamāgne nava vihavyo Vaiśvadevam jagatyantam. Sarvā, p. 48.

37. TS III 1.7. Keith, p. 230.

The Taittiriya records a calamity that befell the great Vasiṣṭha *i.e.* the tragic death of his sons.—

Vasiṣṭho hataputro'kāmayata vindeya prajāṃ  
abhi Saudāsān bhaveyam iti sa etam  
ekasmānna pañcāśaṃ apaśyat tam āharat  
tenāyajata tato vai so'avindata prajāṃ abhi  
Saudāsam abhavad ya evam vidvān sa  
ekasmānnapañcāśam āsate vindante prajāṃ  
abhi bhrāṭṛvyān bhavanti /<sup>38</sup>

“ Vasiṣṭha his sons slain, desired “ May I win offspring and defeat the Saudāsas.” He saw this rite of forty-nine nights ; he grasped it and sacrificed with it. Then indeed did he win offspring and defeated the Saudāsas. Those who, knowing thus, perform the rite of forty-nine nights win offspring and defeat their enemies.”

## 2. *Kāthaka, Maitrāyaṇī and Vājasaneyi Samhitās*

These Samhitās have nothing to add to the information already culled out. They repeat the symbolic identity of Vasiṣṭha, Vaśvāmitra and other sages enunciated by the Taittiriya, only with a small change.<sup>39</sup> The following table will make it clear.

The Identity	TS	KS, MS, VS
Prāṇa-Rathantara—East	Vasiṣṭha	Vasiṣṭha
Manas-Brhat—South	Bharadvāja	Bharadvāja
Cakṣus-Vairūpa—West	Viśvāmitra	Jamadagni
Śrotra-Vairāja—North	Jamadagni	Viśvāmitra
Vāc-Śākvara-Raivata—Above	Viśvakarman	Viśvakarman

The following mantra of the R̥gveda is found repeated by VS and KS.<sup>40</sup>

Evéd Índram vṛṣṇam vájrabāhum  
Vasiṣṭhāso abhyarcantyarkaíḥ /  
Sá nas stutó vírávat pātu gómat  
Yūyám pāta svastíbhīś sádā naḥ //

“ Thus do the Vasiṣṭhas worship with praises Indra showerer of benefits, with arms like the thunderbolt. May he, thus praised, make us wealthy in heroes and in kine. And ye, gods, do protect us always with blessings.”

As usual, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are both Seers of several hymns and parts of hymns of the White Yajurveda (VS),<sup>41</sup> which do not contribute to our study,

38. TS VII 4.7. Keith p. 606. compare also VI II, p. 275, KB IV. 8, PB IV 7.8.

39. KS 16.19 ; MS 2.7.19 ; VS 13.54, 57.

40. RV VII 23.6. VS 20.54, KS 8.16. The verse is repeated also in AV XX 12.6, AB 6.23.2, GB 2.4.2, 2.6.5. Vait. 22.14.

41. See C. V. Vaidya, HSL. Vedic Period, p. 207.

except to confirm the uniform importance accorded to both sages by the various Samhitās. Their mutual rivalry, if at all, is of no interest to the general public.

### 3. *Sāmaveda*

Similar is the case with the Sāmaveda. Only Vasiṣṭha's name is celebrated.<sup>42</sup> But both he and Viśvāmitra are seers of verses and hymns which are mostly borrowed from their Ṛgvedic revelations.<sup>43</sup> SV, again, perceives no enmity between the sages.

### 4. *Atharvaveda Samhitā*

Viśvāmitra is referred in AV in three contexts.

Yaú Bharádvājam āvatho yaú Gaviṣṭhiram  
Viśvāmitram<sup>44</sup> Varuṇa Mitra Kútsam /  
Yaú Kaksīvantam āvathaḥ prótá Kāṇvam /  
Taú no muñcatam āmhasaḥ // AV. V 29.5

"It is a prayer to Mitra and Varuṇa : 'Ye who favour Bharadvāja, Gaviṣṭhira, Viśvāmitra, Kutsa, O Varuṇa and Mitra ; who favour Kaksīvat and Kaṇva do ye free us from distress.'"

Kāṇvaḥ Kaksīvān Purumīḍho Agastyah  
Śyāvāśvaḥ Sóbharyarcanānāḥ /  
Viśvāmitro'yām Jamádagnir Átrih  
Ávantu naḥ Kaśyápo Vāmádevaḥ // XVIII 3.15.

'Let Kaṇva, Kaksīyat, Purumīḍha, Agastya, Śyāvāśva, Sobhari, Arcanānas, this Viśvāmitra,<sup>45</sup> Jamadagni, Atri, Kaśyapa, Vāmadeva—let all these protect us.'

Viśvāmitra Jámadagne Vásiṣṭha  
Bháradvāja Gótama Vāmadeva /  
Śardír no Átrir agrabhinnámobhiḥ  
Súsamsāsaḥ pítaro mṛdātā naḥ // XVIII 3.16.

"O Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha, Bharadvāja, Gotama, Vāmadeva—Atri hath taken our abode with obeisances ; ye fathers of good report, be gracious to us."

42. SV Pūrva. 3.5.9. 4.4.8, 6.2.5. Uttara, 3.13.3, 444.8, 5.9.3.

43. C. V. Vaidya, quoted above, p. 198 et. seq.

44. Viśvāmitram viśvam kṛtsnam jagat mitram yasya saḥ tathoktaḥ / Mitre carṣau iti pūrvapadasya dirghaḥ /...

Vasiṣṭham / Vasumattamam / Vasumacchabdād iṣṭhani 'Vinmatorluk' / 'ṭeḥ' iti ṭilopaḥ / Sarvaśreṣṭham Vasiṣṭhākhyam maharṣim rakṣathaḥ / at AV. IV 29.3—Sāyaṇa.

45. Ayam iti idam śabdena purovartivastuvācinā sarvajana-sannihitatvena sarvāmitratvam upapādyate—Sāyaṇa. But Whitney takes ayam with Jamadagni. AV XVIII. 3.63 records the expression "Viśvāmitrāḥ" which does not refer to the sage Viśvāmitra or his descendants. The stanza is in praise of Yama, wherein the 'All-Friends' (Brāhmans) are called upon to offer praise and oblations to the God, so that He may grant long life. See Whitney, AV Tr. (HOS VIII), p. 866.



Viśvāmitra is the seer of a few hymns of the AV. The hymn III 17 is pronounced for successful agriculture (Kṛṣiḥ).<sup>46</sup> AV V 15-16 are exorcisms to plants; used for the healing of distempered cattle also; the later hymn is perhaps directed against insect pests. VI 44 is for cessation of disease, according to Kauśik Sūtra (31.6), it is used in a remedial rite against slander (apavāda). VI 141 is pronounced with marking of cattle's ears (gokarṇayor lakṣyakaraṇam) and 142 is for increase of food grain (annasamṛddhi).<sup>47</sup>

Viśvāmitra's name is thus connected with charms and spells; but they have all been for good purposes. Whereas, by means of these, diseases were removed and food became abundant, why should the sage not be called Viśvā-mitra 'friend of the world'?

The name Vasiṣṭha occurs ten times in the AV. From a study of the context and according to the commentary, the word is used as an adjective five times;<sup>48</sup> so we shall consider the other five here,<sup>49</sup> referring to the sage.

1. Yāvaṅgirasam avatho yāvagastim  
Mitrāvaruṇā Jamadagnim Atrim /  
Yau Kaśyapam avatho yau Vasiṣṭham  
Yau no muñcatam amhasaḥ // IV 29.3.

"Ye who protect Aṅgiras, Agasti, Jamadagni and Atri, O Mitra and Varuṇa, ye who protect Kaśyapa and Vasiṣṭha,—do ye free us from distress."

2. Vasiṣṭha next appears among other names, including Viśvāmitra, (AV XVIII 3.16), as stated above.

3. Ūdu brāhmānyairata śravasyā  
Īndram samaryé mahayā Vasiṣṭha /  
Ā yó viśvāni śāvasā tatāna  
Upaśrotā ma īvato vácāmsi //<sup>50</sup>

"They have all offered their prayer to Indra for the sake of food, you also Vasiṣṭha, do extol him at the sacrifice. And may that Indra, who extended the universe by his might, listen to my words, as I approach him."

46. Cf. RV X 101, IV 57 and parts in VS, Ts, Ta, and Ms. Much of RV material is repeated we discover a few variant readings also. Whereas the Samhitā texts have been handed down with meticulous care and accuracy, a comparative study of the repetitions in the different Samhitā must yield interesting text-critical results.

47. Consult Whitney's Atharva-veda (Tr.)—Harvard Oriental Series, Vols. 7 and 8 (1902) Ed. C. R. Lanman.

48. AV VI. 21.2, 44.2, 119.1, VII 55.2, SVIII 3.46.

49. AV IV 29.3, XVIII 3.16, XX 12.1, 6; 117.8. It may be recalled that Whitney considers books XIX and XX as later additions. In his Harvard Translation, he translates XIX as supplement, XX he does not notice at all. Cruel Death took him away before the volumes were published. Who knows, had he lived, he would have added XX also as supplement.

50. Same as RV VII 28.1, SV I 830, AB 6.18.8, 20.7, KB 29.6, GB 2.4.2, 6.1.2, AA 5.2.2.8 Vait. 22.13. Designated as ud-u-brahmīya sūkta. ŚŚ 18.19.10, 20.6.

4. The next verse 'Evéd Īndram' (AV XX 12.6) was dealt with above in connection with YV references.

5. Bódhā sú me maghavan vacam émam  
 Yám te Vāsiṣṭho árcati práśastim /  
 Imā Bráhma sadhamāde juṣasva //<sup>51</sup> XX 117.3.

“ O Opulent one ! Give heed to this address of mine, this with which Vasiṣṭha offers you praise. These prayers, be pleased to accept at the sacrifice.”

Vasiṣṭha also is the seer of a few hymns in AV. I 29 is a hymn to Brahmanaspati for a chief's success. (Rāṣṭrābhivardhanam sapatnakṣayaṇam ca) ; an amulet is also tied, it is called abhivartamaṇi-sūkta.

III 19-22 are to help friends against enemies (19), to Agni and other gods for various blessings (20,21), to gods in general for splendour (varcas) (22).

IV 22 is for the success and prosperity of a king (amitra-kṣayaṇam : for the destruction of the enemy)—for victory in battle according to Kauśika-sūtra.

XX 12 and 117 are hymns borrowed from the Vāsiṣṭha-maṇḍala of RV.

It may be noticed from the above that Vasiṣṭha is by no means a tame sage. He was definitely, and perhaps more actively than Viśvāmitra connected with martial adventures. With rites and incantations for a king's success in battle, or for a man's prosperity or contentment, Vasiṣṭha must have been a heaven to many kings and men in distress. We notice also that there is not the slightest suggestion of Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra rivalry. By the enumeration alongside of various Ṛṣis it is fair to think that all these sages were alike holy in the eyes of the worshipper, and a great deal of time must have separated the sages and the composer of the hymn (IV 29) with the burden 'taú no muñcatam ámhasaḥ'—an argument for the late age of at least portions of the Atharva-veda. Public opinion does not seem to have taken note of the alleged feud between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. On the other hand, recorded evidence points to the universal recognition accorded to both the sages. Whatever enmity there might have been, it must have been of a purely personal nature—one that did not affect the well-being of the world at large.

### III

#### BRĀHMANAS

This branch of Vedic literature depicts the contributions made by Vasiṣṭha Viśvāmitra to the sacrificial cult. They were chief among those who strove to make the Sacrifice a perfect system. There is not a trace of discord between them;

51. RV VII 22.3, SV 2.279, MS 4.12.4, KS 12.15.

on the other hand their collective service has oftentimes been emphasised. We shall scrutinize in detail :

1. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* first speaks of Viśvāmitra as the seer of the Sampāta Hymns.<sup>52</sup> It is said that he first saw a few hymns which Vāmadeva quickly appropriated as his own, whereupon Viśvāmitra saw fresh ones.<sup>53</sup> In the same manner did Bharadvāja, Vasiṣṭha and Nodhas also see several hymns.<sup>54</sup>

Tān vā etān Sampātān Viśvāmitraḥ prathamam apaśyat tān Viśvāmitreṇa dr̥ṣṭān Vāmadevo'sr̥jataivā tvām Indra vajrinnatra yanna Indro jujuṣe yacca vaṣṭi kathā mahām avṛdhat kasya hotur iti tān kṣipram samapatad yat kṣipram samapatat tat sampātānām sampātatvam /

Sa haikṣāñcakre Viśvāmitro yān vā aham Sampātān apaśyam tān Vāmadevo'sr̥ṣṭa kāni nvaham sūktāni Sampātāmstatpratimān sr̥jeyeti sa etāni sūktāni Sampātāmstatpratimān asr̥jata sadyo ha jāto vṛṣabhaḥ kanīna Indraḥ pūrbhi-dātirad dāsam arkair imāmūṣu prabhṛtim sātaye dhā icchanti tvā somyāsaḥ sakhā-yah Śāsad vahnir duhitur nāptyaṅgād abhi taṣṭeva dīdhayā mañiṣām iti /

Ya eka iddhavyaś carṣaṇinām iti Bharadvājo yas tigmaśṛṅgo vṛṣabho na bhīma udu brahmānyairata śravasyeti Vasiṣṭho'smā idu pra tavase turāyeti Nodhāḥ /<sup>55</sup>

Later these hymns are praised as follows :

Tad etat sūktam<sup>56</sup> svargyam etena vai sūktena devāḥ svargam lokam ajayan etena ṛṣayaḥ tathaivaitadyajamānā etena sūktena svargam lokam jayanti / Tadu Vaiśvāmitram viśvasya ha vai mitram Viśvāmitra āsa / Viśvam hāsmāi mitram bhavati ya evam veda yeṣām caivam vidvān etanmaitrāvaruṇaḥ purastāt sūktānām aharahaḥ śamsati /<sup>57</sup>

“That hymn is heavenly. It is by Viśvāmitra, Viśvāmitra was the friend of all ; all become friendly to him who knows thus and to those for whom a Maitrāvaruṇa, knowing thus, recites this before the hymns day by day.” With this sūkta, again, the gods won the heavens, with this the ṛṣis, and so with this will the sacrificers also win the heavenly world.

Similarly the Vasiṣṭha hymn : Udu brahmānyairata :<sup>58</sup>

Tad etat sūktam savrgyam etena vai sūktena devāḥ svargam lokam ajayan etena ṛṣayas tathaivaitad yajamānā etena ṛṣayas tathaivaitad yajamānā etean sūktena svargam lokam jayanti / Tadu Vasiṣṭham etena vai Vasiṣṭha

52. RV IV 19 ; 22 ; 23.

53. RV III 49 ; 34 ; 36 ; 30 ; 21 ; 38. The hymns are enumerated in the order stated in the *Brāhmaṇa*.

54. RV VI. 22, VII. 19 ; 24. I. 61.

55. AB VI 18.

56. Sadyo ha jāto vṛṣabhaḥ kanīnaḥ (RV III 49)

57. Ibid VI 20.

58. RV VII 24.

Indrasya priyam dhāmopāgacchat sa paramam lokam ajayat / Upendrasya priyam dhāma gacchati jayati paramam lokam ya evam veda /<sup>59</sup>

“ This hymn is heavenly, with this hymn indeed did the gods win the heavens ; with this the Ṛṣis ; and with this will the sacrificers also win the heavenly world. This is by Vasiṣṭha. With this indeed did Vasiṣṭha approach the abode dear to Indra, and he won the supreme world. He who knows thus will go to the abode dear to Upendra (Viṣṇu) and will win the supreme world.”

Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are both connected with the Śunaśśepa legend.<sup>60</sup> In the sacrifice which was contemplated by king Hariścandra they officiated as priests : Vasiṣṭha as Brahmā and Viśvāmitra as Hotā. Viśvāmitra's part in the story of Śunaśśepa is remarkable. He befriended poor Śunaśśepa, adopted him into his family as eldest son and passed on to him his earthly possessions as well as his divine lore. As this story has been fully treated in the foregoing chapter, it is unnecessary to dilate upon it here. Suffice it to remember that the two sages were highly regarded by society and that, between them, no rivalry appears to have existed.

Besides the above, there are a few references in the AB to Vasiṣṭha only. He is said to have introduced the Rathantara-sāman and Bharadvāja the Bṛhatsāman, in connection with a hymn of the Ṛgveda :<sup>61</sup>

Rathantaram ājabhārā Vasiṣṭhaḥ /  
Bharadvājo Bṛhad ācakre agner iti Bṛhadrathantaravantam  
evainam tat karoti /<sup>62</sup>

The term Vasiṣṭha has been pointed out as an appellation to Agni :<sup>63</sup>

Adabdhavratapramatir Vasiṣṭha ityagnir vai devānām Vasiṣṭhaḥ /<sup>64</sup>

Agni is Vasiṣṭha (atiśayena nivāsaheṭuḥ), the best shelter-giver or protector, and one whose preference is always for harmless rites.<sup>65</sup>

In the chapter which describes the sacrifice and the part played therein by the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas, it is said that the famous priests of the times pass on the tradition of the sacrifice and, specially of the participation of the Soma-food (bhakṣa), to their respective royal disciples. Thus, Tura son of Kavaṣa narrated it to Janamejaya son of Parikṣit, Parvata and Narada to Somaka son of Sahadeva, to Sahadeva son of Sṛñjaya, to Bahbru son of Devavṛdh, to Bhīma of

59. AB VI 20.

60. AB VII 16-18.

61. RV X 181.1.

62. AB I 21. cf. also Ait. Ā. III 1.6.

63. RV II 9.1e.

64. AB I 28.

65. adabdhē himsārahite vrata karmaṇi prakṛtā matir yasyāgneḥ so'yam adabdhavratapramatiḥ / Sāyaṇa. AV. Ānandāśrama edn. Vol. I, p. 122.

Vidarbha and to Nagnajit of Gāndhāra; Agni narrated it to Sanaśruta, the suppresser of enemies, knower of the sacrifice, and son of Janaka, (finally) Vasiṣṭha to Sūdās son of Pijavana. And all these having partaken of the Soma-food rose to eminence, all became sovereign lords, being established in glory, all shone like the Sun, gathering tributes from all quarters.<sup>66</sup> This passage warrants the belief that Vasiṣṭha was the priest of king Sūdās, at least in the early part of his reign.

That Vasiṣṭha anointed Sūdās on the throne is stated in another passage. Enumerating the names of several kings of old who were coronated in the manner in which Indra himself was coronated, it is said "With this great anointing of Indra, Vasiṣṭha anointed Sūdās Pijavana. Therefore, Sūdās Pijavana went round the earth completely, conquering on every side, and offered the horse in sacrifice."<sup>67</sup>

Durmukha the Pāñcāla and Atyarāti Jānantapi by the very knowledge of Indra's great anointing conquered the earth, their priests being Bṛhaduktha and Vasiṣṭha Sātyahavya respectively. A kind of conflict is however reported between Atyarāti and the priest Vasiṣṭha Sātyahavya. This Vasiṣṭha, son of Satyahavya said to Atyarāti: "Thou hast conquered entirely the earth on every side: do thou make me great." Then said Atyarāti Jānantapi "When I conquer, O Brahman, the Uttara Kurus, then thou wouldst be king of the earth, and I should be thy General." Vasiṣṭha Sātyahavya replied: "That is a place of the gods, no mortal man may conquer it. Thou hast been false to me, therefore I take this from thee." Then Amitratapana Śuśmīṇa Śaibya, a king, slew Atyarāti Jānantapi, whose strength had been taken away and who had lost his power. Therefore one should not play false with a Brahman who knows thus and has done thus (thinking) "Let me not lose my kingdom, nor let breath forsake me."<sup>68</sup>

66. Etamu haiva provāca 'Turāḥ Kāvaseyo Janamejayāya Pāriksitāyaitamu haiva procatuḥ Parvata-nāradau Somakāya Sāhadevyāya Sahadevāya Sārñjayāya Babhrave Daivāvṛdhāya Bhīmāya Vaidarbhāya Nagnajite Gāndhārāyaitamu haiva provācāgniḥ Sanaśrutāyārindamāya kratuvide Janakāya etamu haiva provāca Vasiṣṭhaḥ Sūdāse Pajavanāya te ha te sarva eva mahajjagmur etam bhakṣam bhakṣayitvā sarve haiva mahārājā āsur āditya iva ha sma śriyām pratiṣṭhitāḥ tapanti sarvābhyo digbhyo balim āvahantaḥ // AB VII 34.

67. Etena ha vā Aindreṇa mahābhiṣekena Vasiṣṭhaḥ Sūdāsam Pajavanam abhiṣiṣeca tasmād u Sūdāḥ Pajavanāḥ samantam sarvataḥ pṛthivīm jayan pariyāyāśvena ca medhyeneja/ AB VIII 21. Other kings anointed in the same fashion are: Tura son of Kavaṣa anointed Janamejaya son of Parikṣit; Cyavana anointed Śāryāta, Somaśuśmā anointed Śātānika, Parvata and Nārada anointed Āmbāṣṭhya and also Yudhāmsrausṭhi; Kaśyapa anointed Viśvakarman, Samvarta son of Āngiras anointed Marutta son of Avikṣit, Udamaya son of Atri anointed Aṅga, and Dirghatamas son of Mamatā anointed Bharata son of Duṣṣanta. After being anointed, all these kings conquered the earth and offered the horse in sacrifice. Ibid. (AB VIII 21).

68. Sa hovāca Vasiṣṭhaḥ Sātyahavyo'jaisir vai samantam sarvataḥ pṛthivīm mahan mā gamayeti sa hovācātyarātir Jānantapir yadā brāhmaṇottarakurūn jayeyam atha tvamu haiva pṛthivyai rājā syāḥ senāpatir eva te'ham syām iti sa hovāca Vasiṣṭhaḥ Sātyahavyo devakṣetram vai tanna vai tanmartyo jetum arhatyadruṣo vai ma ā ta idam dada iti tato hātyarātīm Jānantapim āttavīryam niśśukram amitratapanah Śuśmīṇaḥ Śaibyo rājā jaghāna / Tasmād evaṁ viduṣe brāhmaṇāyau cakruṣe na kṣatriyo druhyenned rāṣṭrād avapadyeyam ned vā mā pṛāṇo jahaditi jahaditi // AB VIII 23. See also Keith's *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas Translated* (Harvard Oriental Series, No. 25, 1920), p. 338 f.

2. The *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*<sup>69</sup> celebrates Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra as follows: While their names are, as usual, connected with several hymns and rites,<sup>70</sup> the *Āraṇyaka* offers useful exegetical comment on their names: Thus Viśvāmitra is "friend of the Universe" or "one to whom the universe is friend."<sup>71</sup> And Vasiṣṭha is the best or most excellent of all.<sup>72</sup> Viśvāmitra is further described as having Indra reveal himself to him.

"Indra sat down beside Viśvāmitra who was about to recite the hymns of this day. He saying 'This is food,' recited the thousand *br̥hatī*s. Thus he went to Indra's dear home. Indra said to him, 'Seer, thou hast come to my dear home. Do thou, seer, repeat a second hymn.' He saying 'This is food,' recited the thousand *br̥hatī* verses. Thus he went to Indra's dear home. Indra said to him, 'Seer, thou hast come to my dear home. Do thou, seer, repeat a third hymn'. He saying 'This is food,' recited the thousand *br̥hatī* verses. Thus he went to Indra's dear home. Indra said to him, 'Seer, thou hast come to my dear home. I give thee a boon.' He said, 'Let me know thee.' Indra said, 'I am breath; thou, seer, art breath; all creatures are breath; he that shines is breath. In this form, I pervade all the quarters. This my food is my friend, my support. This is the food of Viśvāmitra. I am he that shines.' Thus said he."<sup>73</sup>

The *Āraṇyaka* proceeds to describe the importance of the thousand *br̥hatī*s. "The consonants are the body, the vowels the souls, the sibilants the breath. Knowing this he became Vasiṣṭha ('most excellent'). Thence took he the name.

69. Edited with introduction, translation, notes etc. by A. B. Keith, *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, 1909 Oxford.

70. I.2.2. RV III 47 is composed by Viśvāmitra (*Tadu Vaiśvāmitram*). I 4.2. Vasiṣṭha's name is associated with the *Sūdadohas* verse, and again with the *Virāj* verses (I 5.2)—*Virājah śamsatyannam vai virājo'nnādyasyāvaruddhīyai / Vasiṣṭhena paridadhāti Vasiṣṭho'sāniti /*

71. *Tadu Vaiśvāmitram viśvasya ha vai mitram Viśvāmitra āsa / Viśvam hāsmāi mitram bhavati ya evam veda yeśam caivam vidvān etaddhotā śamsati / I 2.2.* This hymn is composed by Viśvāmitra. Now Viśvāmitra was the friend of all, and all is the friend of him who knows this and of those for whom a Hotṛ priest, who knows this, recites this hymn (RV III 47). Again in a later chapter: *Tasyedam viśvam mitram āsid yad idam kiñca tad yad asyedam viśva-mitram āsid yad idam kiñca tasmād Viśvāmitras tasmād Viśvāmitra ityācaksata etam eva santam / (II 2.1).* "Because all whatsoever was his friend, therefore he is Viśvāmitra. Therefore they call him who is (*prāṇa*) Vasiṣṭha."

72. *Tam devā abruvannayam vai naḥ sarveśam Vasiṣṭha iti tasmād Vasiṣṭhas tasmād Vasiṣṭha ityācaksata etam eva santam / II 2.2.* "The gods speak to him, 'Let him be the richest of us all.' Because the gods spake to him, 'Let him be the richest of us all,' therefore he is Vasiṣṭha. Therefore they call him who is (*prāṇa*) Vasiṣṭha."

73. *Viśvāmitram hyetad ahaḥ śamsiṣyantam Indra upaṇiśasāda / Sa hānnam ityabhivyāhṛtya br̥hatīśahasram śaśamsa tenendrasya priyam dhāmoṇyāya / Tam Indra uvāca ṛṣe priyam vai me dhāmoṇyāya sa vā ṛṣe dvitīyam śamseti / Sa hānnam ityevābhivyāhṛtya br̥hatīśahasram śaśamsa tenendrasya priyam dhāmoṇyāya / Tam Indra uvāca ṛṣe priyam vai me dhāmoṇyāya sa vā ṛṣe trītiyam śamsati / Sa hānnam ityevābhivyāhṛtya br̥hatīśahasram śaśamsa tenendrasya priyam dhāmoṇyāya / Tam Indra uvāca ṛṣe priyam vai me dhāmoṇyāya varam dadāmi / Sa hovāca tvām eva jāniyām iti / Tam Indra uvāca Prāṇo vā aham asmyṛṣe prāṇas tvam prāṇas sarvāṇi bhūtāni prāṇo-hyeṣa ya eṣa tapati sa etena rūpeṇa sarvā diśo viṣṭo'sni tasya me'nnam mitram dakṣiṇam tad Vaiśvāmitram eṣa tapann evāsmiṭi hovāca // II 2.3. (Ait. Āraṇyaka).*

Indra proclaimed this to Viśvāmitra, Indra proclaimed this to Bharadvāja, so Indra is in sacrifices invoked by him as a friend.”<sup>74</sup>

3. The *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*<sup>75</sup> presents Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra in much the same manner as the AB and Ait. Ā. Viśvāmitra is identified with Vāc (Speech) —Vāg vai Viśvāmitraḥ;<sup>76</sup> and is associated with certain puronuvākyas, praiṣas and anupraiṣas.<sup>77</sup> Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are together associated with certain invocations.<sup>78</sup> Vasiṣṭha by himself too is mentioned in connection with several group invocations.<sup>79</sup> But noteworthy is what is referred to as Vasiṣṭha-yajña. It is a sacrifice performed by Vasiṣṭha in order to avenge the death of his son (Śakti) or sons, caused by the Saudāsas.

Vasiṣṭho'kāmayata<sup>80</sup> hataputraḥ prajāyeya prajāyā paśubhir abhi Saudāsān bhaveyam iti sa etam yajñakratum apaśyad Vasiṣṭhayajñam tam āharat tenāyajata teneṣṭvā prajāyata prajāyā paśubhir abhi Saudāsān abhavat tatho evaitad yajamāno yad Vasiṣṭhayajñena yajate prajāyate prajāyā paśubhir abhi dvīṣato bhrātṛvyān bhavati //

‘When his sons were killed, Vasiṣṭha desired: ‘I should propagate and should, with progeny and cattle, defeat the Saudāsas’. Then he saw this sacrifice, conceived the Vasiṣṭhayajña, with that he sacrificed and, having sacrificed propagated, and then with progeny and cattle defeated the Saudāsas. Thus if a sacrificer sacrifices according to Vasiṣṭhayajña, he will propagate and with progeny and cattle will conquer the enemies’.

4. The *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*<sup>81</sup> refers, principally,<sup>82</sup> to the incident of Viśvāmitra receiving revelation from Indra: a fact borne out by other texts as well.<sup>83</sup>

“Viśvāmitra indeed went to the dear home of Indra by reason of recitation and the performance of vows. To him, said Indra, ‘Viśvāmitra, choose a boon’.

74. Tad vā idam brhatīśahasram sampannam tasya yāni vyañjanāni taccharīram yo ghoṣaḥ sa ātmā ya ūsmāṇaḥ sa prāṇaḥ / Etaddha sma vai tad vidvān vasiṣṭho Vasiṣṭho babhūva tata etan nāmadheyam lebhe / Etad u haivendro Viśvāmitrāya provācāitadu haivendro Bharadvājāya provāca tasmāt sa tena bandhunā yajñeṣu hūyate // II 2.4.

75. Ed. Ānandāśrama Series, No. 65.

76. Śāṅkh. B. X 5, XV.1, XXIX. 3.

77. Ibid., also XXBIII 1,2.

78. Śāṅkh. B XXVI. 14, XXVIII. 10 etc.

79. Compare e.g. Vasiṣṭham ājyam Vasiṣṭham prṣṭham (XXII.7), Vasiṣṭhaḥ praugaḥ (XXV.2, XXVI.15), Vasiṣṭham āprīśūktam (XXV.10) etc.

80. Ibid. IV.8.

81. Text. Ānandāśrama Series No. 90. Translation by A. B. Keith. Oriental Translation Fund Series, No.18, RAS, 1908.

82. Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha are as usual associated with certain hymns and formulas. vide II 7,16. The name Vasiṣṭha occurs again in IX 2 but appears to have been used in its adjectival sense. Yo ha vai vasiṣṭhām veda vasiṣṭho ha svānām bhavati vāg vai vasiṣṭhā /—“He who knows the most excellent becomes the most excellent among his own (people). Speech indeed is the most excellent.”

83. Compare, for instance, Ait. Ā. II 2.4 supra.

Viśvāmitra said 'Let me know thee'. '(choose) again'. 'Thee only'. '(choose) a third time'. 'Thee only'. To him said Indra 'I am the great (m) and the great (f), the god and the goddess, the Brahman and the Brāhmaṇi'. Viśvāmitra was still feign to know more. To him said Indra, 'I am that which I have said, but what is more, he that performs no penance may be even such as I am'. Then indeed did Indra proclaim the vyāhṛtis. They sufficed for him."<sup>84</sup>

The last section of the book gives a long line of Teachers from whom tradition was handed down. The list is interesting not only for many renowned names of ancient tradition but also for the light it throws upon the chronological relationship of those eminent personalities. It is significant that Vasiṣṭha does not find a place in this series. Perhaps he represents another school. Viśvāmitra receives the knowledge directly from Indra and is removed from Brahman only by three generations.

Says the author of the Āraṇyaka—we have learnt it from Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana, Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana from Kahola Kauṣītaki, Kahola Kauṣītaki from Uddālaka Āruṇi, Uddālaka Āruṇi from Priyavrata Saumāpi, Priyavrata Saumāpi from Somapa, Somapa from Soma Prātiveśya, Soma Prātiveśya from Prativeśya, Prativeśya from Bṛhaddiva, Bṛhaddiva from Sumnayu, Sumnayu from Uddālaka, Uddālaka from Viśvamanas, Viśvamanas from Vyaśva, Vyaśva from Sākamaśva Devarāta, Devarāta from Viśvāmitra, Viśvāmitra from Indra, Indra from Prajāpati, Prajāpati from Brahman, Brahman (n) is self-existent. Honour to Brahman, honour to Brahman.<sup>85</sup>

5. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, as elsewhere, the sages Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha are symbolised as Ear (śrotra)<sup>86</sup>. and Breath (prāṇa)<sup>87</sup> respectively. The context is the construction of the first layer in the building of the sacred

84. Śāṅkh. Ā. I.6. "Viśvāmitro ha vā Indrasya priyaṁ dhāmopajāgāma śastreṇa ca vṛtacakṛtāyā tam hendra uvāca Viśvāmitra varam vṛṇīsveti sa hovāca Viśvāmitras tvām eva vijāñyām iti dvitīyaṁ iti tvām eveti trīyaṁ iti tvām eveti tam hendra uvāca mahāśca mahatī cāsmi devaśca devī cāsmi brahma ca brāhmaṇī cāsmīti tata u ha Viśvāmitro vijijñāsām eva cakre tam hendra uvācāitad vā aham asmi yad etad avocam yad vā kṛṣeto bhūyo'tapas tad eva tat syādaham iti tad vā Indro vyāhṛtir ūce tā upāptā āsannyathopanidhāya preṅkhaphalakam trirabhyam nyatirabhyavan iti //

85. Ibid XV. Namō Brahmanē nama Ācāryebhyo Guṇākhyāc Chāṅkhāyanād asmābhir adhitam Guṇākhyāś Śāṅkhāyanah Kaholāt Kauṣītakeḥ Kaholaḥ Kauṣītakir Uddālakād Āruṇer Uddālaka Āruṇiḥ Priyavratāt Somāpeḥ Priyavratas Somāpis Somapāt Somapas Somāt Prātiveśyāt somah Prātiveśyah Prātiveśyāt Prativeśyo Bṛhaddivād Bṛhaddivas Sumnayos Sumnayur Uddālakād Uddālako Viśvamanaso Viśvamanā Vyaśvād Vyaśvas Sākamaśvāt Sākamaśvo Devarātād Devarāto Viśvāmitrād Viśvāmitra Indrād Indrah Prajāpateḥ Prajāpatir Brahmano Brahmanā Svayambhūr namō Brahmanē namō Brahmanē //

86. ŚB 8.1.2.6—Śrotram vai Viśvāmitra ṛṣir yad anena sarvataś śrotyatho yad asmai sarvato mitram bhavati tasmācchrotram Viśvāmitra ṛṣih. (Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa ed. Albrecht Weber. Berlin 1855 with extracts from the commentaries of Sāyaṇa, Harisvāmīn and Dviveda Ganga etc. Text editions have been recently brought out in Benares (Kasi Sanskrit Series 127, 1937 etc.) and in Bombay (Lakshmi-Venkatesvar Steam Press, 1940). See Dandekar's Vedic Bibliography. ŚB was translated by Julius Eggeling in SBE volumes 12, 26, 41, 43 and 44, the last portion known as the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (XIV 4-9) being left out.)

87. ŚB 8.1.1.6—Prāṇo vai Vasiṣṭha ṛṣir yad vai nu śreṣṭhas tena Vasiṣṭho'tho yad vastṛtamo vasati teno eva Vasiṣṭhaḥ.



fire-altar. Secondly, they are among the Seven Sages (saptarṣis) representing the seven vitals viz. two eyes, two nostrils, two ears and the mouth, which together constitute the prāṇas.<sup>88</sup>

Sage Vasiṣṭha is specially glorified inasmuch as he knew the Virāj, even 'Indra coveted it' and desired to know the same from the sage. Vasiṣṭha communicated the same to him and in return obtained the knowledge of the expiation for the whole Soma sacrifice. For some time, indeed, "the Vasiṣṭhas alone knew these utterances, whence only one of the Vasiṣṭha family became the Brahman priest. But since nowadays anybody may study them, anybody may now become Brahman."<sup>89</sup>

Otherwise, the term Vasiṣṭha is several times used in an attributive sense. There is, for example, reference to Vasiṣṭha-yajña (excellent sacrifice) which Prajāpati performs in order to propagate mankind.<sup>90</sup> Agni is the guardian of undisturbed rites and the most wealthy (vasiṣṭhaḥ).<sup>91</sup> Speech is, indeed, an excellent thing (vāg vai vasiṣṭhā).<sup>92</sup>

Thus, the mention of the office of the Brahman priest being thrown open to all who know the job proves the posteriority of the Śatapatha to the Taittiriya. And be it noted that even at such a late period, the special importance of the Vasiṣṭhas was recognised and no ill-will expressed. Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are alike members of the priestly hierarchy.

6. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>93</sup> of the Sāmaveda, also known as Tāṇḍya-mahābrāhmaṇa, records something of value which throws light on the personal history of the two sages, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. Besides, they, being among

88. ŚB XIV 5.2.6—Prāṇā vā ṛṣayaḥ...Imāveva Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni...imāveva Vasiṣṭha Kaśyapau. Dviveda Ganga explains the sevenfold prāṇa as: cakṣurdvayam nāsikādvayam śrotādvayam mukham iti sapta (prāṇāḥ) p. 1126 Weber's edn.

89. ŚB XII 6.1.38-41—Tā Brahmaiva juhuyāt nābrahmā...Vasiṣṭho ha virājam vidām cakāra tām hendro'bhidadhyau // Sa hovāca / Rṣe Virājam ha vai vettha tām me brūhiti sa hovāca kim mama tataḥ syād iti sarvasya ca te yajñasya prāyaścittim brūyām rūpam ca tvā darśayeyeti sa hovāca yannu me sarvasya yajñasya prāyaścittim brūyāḥ kimu sa syād mam tvam rūpam darśayethā iti jīvasvarga evāsmallokāt preyād iti // Tato haitām ṛṣir Indrāya Virājam uvāca / Iyam vai virād iti tasmād yo'syai bhūyiṣṭham labhate sa eva śreṣṭho bhavati // Atha haitām Indra ṛṣaye / Prāyaścittim uvācāgnihotrād agra ā mahata ukthāt tā ha smaitāḥ purā vyāhṛtīr Vasiṣṭhā eva vidus tasmāddha sma purā Vasiṣṭha eva Brahmā bhavati yatas tvenā / apyetarhi ya eva kaś cādhiṭe tato 'pyetarhi ya eva kaśca Brahmā bhavati sa ha vai Brahmā bhavitum arhati sa vā Brahmān ityāmantritaḥ pratisṛṇuyād ya evametā vyāhṛtīr veda //

90. ŚB II 4.4.2—Prajāpatir vā ctenāgre yajñeneje / Prajākāmo bahuḥ prajāyā paśubhiḥ syām Śriyam gaccheyam yaśaḥ syām annādāḥ syām iti // Sa vai dakṣo nāma / Tad yad enena so'gre yajata tasmād dākṣāyanayajño nāma, utainam eke Vasiṣṭhayajña ityācaksate. Contrast Śākh. B. IV 8, where Vasiṣṭhayajña is that performed by sage Vasiṣṭha to avenge the death of his son or sons. See Supra section (3), p.

91. ŚB VI 4.2.7—adabdhavratapramatir Vasiṣṭhaḥ (Agniḥ).

92. ŚB XIV 9.2.2—Vāg vai Vasiṣṭhā same Khandā 7—Ko no vasiṣṭha iti ('which of us is best' ś),—14—Vāg uvāca yad vāham vasiṣṭhāsmi,—3.4—Vasiṣṭhāyai svāhā.

93. Text with Sāyaṇa's commentary: Kashi Sanskrit Series, No. 105 in two parts, Benares 1935. Ed. A Chinnaśwami Sastri. English Translation by Dr. W. Caland in Bibliotheca Indica, No. 255, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1931.

the foremost in the priestly ranks, are credited with the seership of several *sāmans* in connection with various sacrificial rites.

Thus the 'Krośa'-*sāman* is attributed to Viśvāmitra "By this (*sāman*), forsooth, Indra (once upon a time) at Indra-krośa yelled : ' Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, here are cows'. The Krośa is applied for gaining cattle."<sup>94</sup>

"Krośam bhavati / Etena vā Indra Indrakrośe Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni imā gāva ityākrośat paśūnām avarudhyai Krośam kriyate."

Similarly, the Rohita-kūliya-*sāma* which is to win victory in battle. A legend is related in this connection.<sup>95</sup> Viśvāmitra once upon a time went with the cart-train of the Bharatas. He made a wager with certain fellows, the Adanti by name, 'Ye shall win for me this wealth, ye shall fill these carts for me, if these two ruddy ones shall drive up the bank this cart laden with stones.' He thereupon saw these two *sāmans*; by means of these, having yoked them, he drove them forward and won the wager.

"Rohita-kūliyam bhavatyājijityāyai / Etena vai Viśvāmitro rohitābhyām rohitakūla ājim ajayat / Viśvāmitro Bharatānām manas satyā ayāt so'danti-bhir nāma janatāyām śam prāsyaṭe mām mām yūyam astikām jayāthemāni mahyam pūrayātha yadimāvidam rohitāvaśmācitam kūlam udvahata iti sa ete sāmanī apaśyat tābhyām yuktvā prasedhat so udajayat // " (PB XIV 8.11-18).

94. PB XIII 5.14-15. Caland adduces a legend in this connection culled from the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa (in Auswahl edited by himself, III 287). 'The Bharatas once upon a time were on one bank of the Sindhu hard pressed by the Ikṣvākus. With them (*i.e.* the Bharatas) stayed Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni. Now Indra asked of Bhayada, son of King Asamāti, the two bay steeds which the gods had given him as gift. He did not give them to him. These not having been given, he (Indra) called at Indrakrośa and said " Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, acquire ye these cows of the Ikṣvākus." These two being on the opposite bank heard this. They said to the Bharatas, ' Indra calls unto us, acquire ye these cows of the Ikṣvākus, come along let us acquire them.' They answered ' Then make you two this Sindhu fordable for us.' ' Then yoke ye your horses.' They yoked and descended into the river. Then these two said, ' Throw away all your palpūlanis.' They threw them away. Now a rājanyabandhu, who possessed a palpūlanī bound it beneath the axle of his chariot. Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni wished, " May this (Sindhu) be fordable for us." Viśvāmitra saw this *sāman* and landed with it. They came into the river addressing these verses (RV I 11.4-6) and respectfully approached the water. The stream became fordable and they crossed. ...These two having passed behind the cows of the Ikṣvākus hemmed them in front and acquired the cattle. The legend bears a striking similarity to the famous crossing of the Rivers by Sudās, with the help of Viśvāmitra who made the rivers fordable at the confluence of Vipāś and Śutudrī (*cf.* RV III 33).—*Vide* Caland's translation, p. 324 f.

95. PB XIV 8.11-18. Caland again cites the corresponding version from JB (in Auswahl, III 188) which runs ' Viśvāmitra, in the company of the waggon-train of the Bharatas, encountered the Mahāvṛśas. Now there was either on the Gaṅgā or the Yamunā, a high, steep bank at the opposite side. Said the Mahāvṛśas, " which forsooth, are now those two draught-oxen that will be able to drive up such a high, steep bank ? " Viśvāmitra answered, " These two ruddy ones of mine." Said the Mahāvṛśas, " Let us make a wager, if the draught-oxen will drive up this bank, thou shalt fill the cart with wares, but if they do not drive up we shall win thy wares." He agreed to this. The oxen were yoked to a cart laden with barley or rice. Viśvāmitra wished, " May I win the race," and saw these two *sāmans* and drove them on. The oxen reached the opposite bank, so Viśvāmitra won the race... And because he had won at the bank ( *kūla* ) by means of his two ruddy ones ( *rohita* ), therefore these two *sāmans* are called Rohita-kūliyas.—*Vide* Caland, p. 354 f.

The first reference to Viśvāmitra's association with a kingdom as its lord is met with in this Brāhmaṇa. He is said to have performed a four-day rite called 'Saṅjaya,' to obtain victory. "The Jahnus and the Vṛcivats quarrelled for the possession of the kingdom. Viśvāmitra, the king of the Jahnus saw this rite and practised it. He got the kingdom, the others were deprived of it. One who has a rival should perform it. He who knows this succeeds himself and his rival is defeated."

" .....Viśvāmitrasya saṅjayaḥ / Jahnu-Vṛcivanto rāṣṭra āhimsanta sa Viśvāmitro Jāhnavo Rājaitam apaśyat sa rāṣṭram abhavad arāṣṭram itare / Bhrātrvyavān yajeta / Bhavatyātmanā parā'sya bhrātrvyo bhavati ya evam veda " // (PB XXI 12.1-4).

The sage Vasiṣṭha, likewise, saw a number of sāmans. The famous Rathantara is assigned to him. Having concentrated all its greatness, Vasiṣṭha chanted it and went to the world of heaven.

"Tasya Vasiṣṭho mahimno vinidhāya tena stutvā  
svargam lokam ait tām sambhṛtyodgāyet " /<sup>96</sup>

A certain Vasiṣṭha, son of Viḍu praised with a sāman seen by the sage Vasiṣṭha, and succeeded in getting a glimpse of heaven.

"Vāsiṣṭham bhavati / Vasiṣṭho vā etena Vaidavah  
stutvāñjasā savrgam lokam apaśyat ... " /<sup>97</sup>

Another sāman dear to Vasiṣṭha or one that endeared the sage is mentioned. That sāman, in fact, enabled Vasiṣṭha to win Indra's favour. And he, who in praising applies the Vasiṣṭha-sāman, wins the favour of the deities.

"Vasiṣṭhasya priyam bhavati / Etena vai  
Vasiṣṭha Indrasya premāṇam agacchat premāṇam  
devatānām gacchati Vāsiṣṭhena tuṣṭuvānaḥ... " /<sup>98</sup>

Nihava-sāman is another contribution of the sage Vasiṣṭha, who on that account became a special favourite of Indra. It is like this : Once upon a time "the seers did not see Indra face to face. Vasiṣṭha desired : 'How may I see Indra face to face?' He saw this Nihava-sāman and, thereupon, he saw Indra face to face. Indra said to him : 'I will tell thee a brāhmaṇa so that the Bharatas, having thee as their chaplain, may be multiplied, but do not disclose me to the other seers'. He told him those stomabhāgas (sāman-groups), and,

96. PB VII 7-18. Sāyana : tasya rathantarasya mahimno mātmyāni viprakīrṇāni vinidhāya viśeṣaikaikatra sthāpya. Contrast Caland's tr. "having distributed its greatness." The mātmyas are indicated in the next sentence of the text—Yaste goṣu mahimā yaste apsu rathe vā te stanayitnau ya u te yaste agnau mahimā tena sambhava Rathantara dravinavanna edhi // Ibid, VII 19.

97. PB XI 8.13-14.

98. PB XII 12.9-10 cf. also XV 8.38.

thereupon, the Bharatas, having Vasiṣṭha as their chaplain, were multiplied. This sāman is associated with Indra."

Rṣyao vā Indram pratyakṣam nāpaśyan sa Vasiṣṭho'kāmaya katham Indram pratyakṣam paśyeyam iti sa etan nihavam apaśyat tato vai sa Indram pratyakṣam apaśyat; sa eṇam abravīd brāhmaṇam te vakṣyāmi yathā tvatpurohitā Bharatāḥ prajāniśyante'tha mā'nyebho ṛṣibhyo mā pravoca iti tasmā etān stomabhāgān abravīt tato vai Vasiṣṭhapurohitā Bharatāḥ prajāyanta sendram vā etat sāma yad etat sāma bhavati sendratvāya //<sup>99</sup>

But, apart from these distinguishing contributions to the efficacy of the sacrificial rites, on the part of Vasiṣṭha, he is oftentimes represented as having been afflicted by the death of his son Śakti or of a hundred sons as later legend puts it. In his sad bereavement he saw sāmans and performed rites not only to console himself but also to avenge the son's death which was alleged to have been caused by the sons or descendants of Sudās (Saudāsas), under the instigation of Viśvāmitra. Thus Vasiṣṭha saw the pragātha : " Indra krātum na ā bhara " (RV VII 32.26) and then became rich in progeny and cattle. This pragātha is for the sake of obtaining progeny.

' Indra kratum na ābhareti pragātho bhavati /  
Vasiṣṭho vā etam putrahato'paśyat sa prajāyā  
paśubhiḥ prajāyata yad eṣa pragātho bhavati prajātyai " //<sup>100</sup>

For the same reason *viz.* the death of the son and towards the same end *viz.* progeny and cattle, does Vasiṣṭha in another context see what is known as Janitra-sāman, constituting two chants : The janitra is said to come under a more comprehensive category called the Brahma-sāman.

" Vasiṣṭhasya Janitram prajākāmāya Brahmasāma kuryāt /  
Vasiṣṭho vā etat putrahatas sāmāpaśyat  
sa prajāyā paśubhiḥ prajāyata yad etat sāma bhavati  
prajātyai " //<sup>101</sup>

Finally Vasiṣṭha saw a four-day rite called catūrātra and practised it whereby he relieved himself of the sense of defeat and humiliation caused by his son's death.

99. PB XV 5.24. *cf.* also PB V 4.5. The same legend in TS III 5.2. and KS XXXVII 17. Bharatas are an ancient clan. According to the Nighaṇṭu, the term is counted among ṛtvik names (Nigh. III 18.1), *Supra* note 3.

100. PB IV 7.3. On the pragātha mentioned, compare Sarvā. (p. 25) which says : Saudā-sair agnau prakṣipyamāṇaḥ Śaktir antyam pragātham ālebhe (ārebhe) so'rddharca ukte'dahyata / tam putroktam Vasiṣṭhaḥ samāpayateti Śātyāyanakam Vasiṣṭhasya eva hataputrasyārśam iti tāṇḍakam // The Tāṇḍaka (*i.e.* PB IV 7.8) in question, evidently, goes a step forward and says that the bereaved sage saw this pragātha to make up for the loss, as at were, by obtaining progeny. The legend is alluded to in other texts as well : *cf.* KS XII 10. TS II 5.2.1, VII 4.7.1 etc.

101. PB VIII 2.3-4. *Vide* Caland's observation on the Brahmasāman. *cf.* the corresponding legend narrated in JB. described by H. Oertel in JAOS XVIII p. 47 f. (1897).

This coupled with Vasiṣṭha's two Janitra-sāmans will elevate the man in distress from position to position and bring him progeny as well :

“ Vasiṣṭhaḥ putrahato hina ivāmanyata sa etam  
apaśyat so'gram paryaid yo hina iva manyeta sa  
etena yajeta / Yat stomāt stomam abisañ-  
krāmatyagrādevāgram rohati Vasiṣṭhasya Janitre  
bhavataḥ prajātyai // ”<sup>102</sup>

Thus, the Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa records the high celebrity attained by Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. A certain amount of personal history of these sages is provided inasmuch as in the one case the son's death had had a profound effect upon the father, and in the other, Viśvāmitra's kingship of the Jahnuś has been expressed and a not inconsistent martial and sportive spirit clearly illustrated by the Indrakrośa and Rohitakūla incidents. One may still wonder, with the background of the Samhitā-evidence, whether the kingship of the Jahnuś still proves the rājanyatva of Viśvāmitra : *i.e.* whether Viśvāmitra belonged to the Kṣatriya-varṇa. It looks as if that the four varṇas had not yet become water-tight compartments. There is again, no reference to the sages' mutual hostility. Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni are friends, a fact borne out by RV also.<sup>103</sup>

7. In the *Jaiminīya or Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>104</sup> Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra figure with equal importance. The Uktha is said to belong to Viśvāmitra. “ Verily, food is all (viśva) and breath is friend (mitra). Now Viśvāmitra through exertion, through penance, through the performance of vows went unto the dear abode of Indra. And he proclaimed to him that which has come to man here. Now he went for instruction (saying) ‘ Light is this uktha’. ‘ Light (jyotis) has two syllables, breath (prāṇa) has two, food (anna) has two. That same is firmly established in food. Then Jamadagni went for instruction to him (saying) ‘ Life (āyus) is this uktha. Life (āyus) has two syllables, breath two, food two. That same is firmly established in food. Then Vasiṣṭha went for instruction to him (saying) ‘ The cow (gauḥ) is this uktha. That same is just food. For the cow is food.’ ”

‘ Tad etad Vaiśvāmitram uktham / Tad annam vai viśvam prāṇo  
mitram / Taddha Viśvāmitraḥ śrameṇa tapasā vratacaryeṇendrasya priyam  
dhāmopajagāma / Tasmā u haitat provāca yad idam manuṣyān āgatam /

102. PB XXI 11.2-3. along with Ibid. VIII 2.3-4 and XIX 3.8 Vasiṣṭhasya Janitre bhavato Vasiṣṭho vā ete putrahatas sāmanī apaśyat sa prajāyā paśubhiḥ prajāyata yad ete sāmanī bhavataḥ prajātyai //

103. cf. RV III 53.16, X 167.4.

104. Text (in Roman), translation (English) and notes : by Hanns Oertel. American Oriental Society (Journal Vol. XVI Part I, 1894). Text in Devanāgarī ed. Pandit Rama Deva (Lahore : Dayānanda Sanskrit Series 3) with an essay in Hindi on the history of Sāmaveda Literature by Pandit Bhagavad Datta, 1921. The credit of first bringing into light the JB goes to Dr. H. Oertel who subsequently wrote on the ‘ Contributions from the JB to the History of the Brāhmaṇa Literature ’ (Vide JAOS XVIII etc.).

Taddha sa upaniṣasāda jyotir etad uktham iti / Jyotir iti dve akṣare prāṇa  
 iti dve annam iti dve / Tad etad anna eva pratiṣṭhitam / Atha hainam  
 Jamadagnir upaniṣasāda āyur etad uktham iti / Āyur iti dve akṣare prāṇa  
 iti dve annam iti dve / Tad etad anna eva pratiṣṭhitam / Atha hainam  
 Vasiṣṭha upaniṣasāda gaur etad uktham iti / Tad etad annam eva / Annam  
 hi gauḥ / ”<sup>105</sup>

Viśvāmitra went to the abode of Indra through exertion, penance and vows (śrameṇa tapasā vratacaryeṇa) may not be without significance in view of the elaboration of this process in the Rāmāyaṇa, of course with much colour and conceit added.

Again, “Indra said the uktha to Viśvāmitra (saying that it is Speech: Vāc). Therefore the descendants of Viśvāmitra worship Speech only. Manu ordained brahman-hood to Vasiṣṭha. Therefore they say, Brahman belongs to Vasiṣṭha. This also they say, one knowing thus is a brahman-priest; and who is equal to a Vasiṣṭha knowing thus?”

“Vāg iti hendro Viśvāmitrāyoktham uvāca / Tad etad Viśvāmitrā  
 upāsate vācam eva / Manur ha Vasiṣṭhāya brahmatvam uvāca / Tasmād  
 āhur vasiṣṭham eva brahmeti / Tad u vā āhur evamvid eva brahmā / Ka  
 u evamvidam Vasiṣṭham arhatīti / ”<sup>106</sup>

Vasiṣṭha is said to promote progeny by means of an after-verse (anumantra) of the stomabhāga, and by reciting it he did obtain abundant progeny and cattle.

“Athaiṣa Vasiṣṭhasyaikastomabhāgānumantraḥ tena haitena Vasiṣṭhaḥ  
 prajātikamo’numantrayām cakre ...tato vai sa bahuḥ prajāyā paśubhiḥ  
 prajāyata ” /<sup>107</sup>

8. The *Saḍvīmśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>108</sup> describes how Indra imparted the Uktha to Viśvāmitra and Brahma to Vasiṣṭha; Speech (Vāk) is Uktha and Mind (manas) is Brahma. Mind and Speech are invaluable assets to Sacrifice and its technique. Even so, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are central figures in propounding and perfecting the sacrificial cult. Mind and Speech are further graphically represented as the two ruts of the wheels of the chariot namely the Sacrifice.

“Indro ha vai Viśvāmitrāyoktham uvāca Vasiṣṭhāya brahma, vāg  
 uktham ityeva Viśvāmitrāya mano brahma Vasiṣṭhāya / Tad vā etad  
 Vasiṣṭham brahma / Api haivamvidam vā Vasiṣṭham vā brahmāṇam  
 kurvita / Tad yathobhayavartaninā rathena yām yām diśam prārthayate  
 tām tām abhiprāpnotyevam etenobhayavartaninā yajñena yam kāmāyate  
 tam abhyaśnute ” /<sup>109</sup>

105. JUBr. III 3.6-13.

106. JUBr III 1-3.

107. Ibid., III 18.6.

108. Ed. W. H. Julius with commentary entitled *Vijñāpanabhāṣya*.

109. *Saḍ B. I 5.*

Just as a person seated on a chariot can go in a required direction, so also a person performing a sacrifice will obtain the desired object.<sup>110</sup>

9. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>111</sup> of the Atharvaveda speaks of the penance performed by various sages. Vasiṣṭha is said to have done it in two places in the midst of the River Vipāś, the places being known as Vasiṣṭha-śilā and Kṛṣṇa-śilā. Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni did penance in a place called Jāmadagna; Agastya in Agastya-tīrtha<sup>112</sup> etc. Indra's special favour to Vasiṣṭha inasmuch as he revealed to him the stomabhāgas has been described in term similar to those in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.<sup>113</sup> Vasiṣṭha's name is further associated with the hinkāra which is sacred to the sacrifice.<sup>114</sup> Sacrifice itself is guarded by the different sages: Vāmadeva guarded it in the South, Vasiṣṭha in the middle, Bharadvāja in the North and Viśvāmitra on all sides. Hence Maitrāvaruṇa will not swerve from Vāmadeva, Bhāhmaṇācchamsin will not swerve from Vasiṣṭha, Acchāvāka will not from Bharadvāja; and all will stand by Viśvāmitra. Thus do the seers zealously guard the sacrifice.<sup>115</sup> Finally, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are mentioned as the seers of Sampāta hymns, while a kind of plagiarism is ascribed to Vāmadeva who appropriated the sampātas first seen by Viśvāmitra for himself, whereupon the latter saw fresh ones!<sup>116</sup>

It will be seen from the above that the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* does not perpetrate the so-called tradition of an hostility between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. On the contrary both of them are represented as quite friendly in the domain of sacrifice. People have faith in both and look upon them with respect. And what is more, both are god's favourites.

110. The same idea is well described in JUBr. III 16 :

ayam vāva yajño yoyam pavate / Tasya vāk ca manasā ca hyeṣa etan manasā ca vartate / Tasya hotādhvaryur udgātetyanyatarām vācā vartanim samskurvanti / Tasmāt te vācā kurvanti / Brahmaiva manasā anyatarām / Tasmāt sa tūṣṇim āste //

The sacrifice rests on Speech and Mind. These are the two ruts on which the sacrifice proceeds. The three priests, hotṛ, adhvaryu and udgātṛ, look after one of them by means of speech (because they recite aloud the praises and the chants), whereas the Brahman priest contemplates upon the other in mind only; hence he remains silent. He is responsible for the flawless performance of the rites; therefore he silently but vigilantly supervises the work of all the others.

111. Das *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, Herausgegeben von Dr. Dieuke Gaastra (Leiden, 1919). GB text was printed in Calcutta by Jivānanda Vidyāsāgar in 1891.

112. BG I 2.8. Atha khalu Vipānmadhye Vasiṣṭha-śilā nāma prathama āśramo dvitīyāḥ Kṛṣṇaśilās tasmin Vasiṣṭhas samātapat, Viśvāmitra-Jamadagni Jāmadagne tapataḥ / ...Agastyo'-gastyatīrthe tapati / etc.

113. Ibid II 2.13. cf. PB XV 5.24 which particularises Vasiṣṭha's patronage to the Bharatas, whereas here it is mankind (prajā) in general. cf note 3 Supra.

114. Ibid II 8.9. Prajāpatir vai yat prajā asṛjata tā vai tāntā asṛjata / Tā hinkārenaivābhyaighrat / .....Atha khalvāhur maharsir vā etad yajñasyāgre geyam apaśyat / Tad etad yajñasyāgre geyam yaddhinkāras tam devās ca ṛṣyaś cābruvan Vasiṣṭho'yam astu yo no yajñasyāgre geyam adrāḡ iti / Tad etad yajñasyāgre geyam yaddhinkāras tato vai sa devānām sṛeṣṭho'-bhavat; yena vai sṛeṣṭhas tena Vasiṣṭhaḥ /

115. Ibid II 8.23. Devān ha yajñam tanvānān asuraraksāmsyajighāmsan / Te'bruvan Vāmadevam tvam na imam yajñam daksīṇato gopāyeti / Madhyato Vasiṣṭham / Uttarato Bharadvājam / Sarvān anu Viśvāmitram / Tasmān Maitrāvaruṇo Vāmadevānna pracayate Vasiṣṭhād Brāhmaṇācchamsi Bharadvājād Acchāvākas sarve Viśvāmitrāt / Eta evāsmā tad ṛṣayo'har ahar namagā apramattā yajñam rakṣanti ya evam veda ya evam veda /

116. Ibid II 6.1. which is almost a repetition of AB VI 18-20.

## IV

## VEDIC ANCILLARIES

1. *Nirukta*

While explaining the name Sarasvatī as Speech and a River, Yāska relates briefly the story of Viśvāmitra and the Rivers.

Tatrethāsam ācakṣate Viśvāmitra ṛṣiḥ Sudāsah Paijavanasya purohito babhūva / Viśvāmitraḥ sarvamitraḥ ... Sa vittam gṛhītvā Vipāṭchutudryoḥ sambhedam āyayāv anuyayur itare / Sa Viśvāmitro nadis tuṣṭāva gādā bhavateti //<sup>117</sup>

‘In that connection they relate a story. The sage Viśvāmitra was priest of king Sudās son of Pijavana. Viśvāmitra was a friend to all. Taking his wealth he came to the confluence of Vipāś and Śutudrī; others followed; Viśvāmitra praised the rivers (and prayed) ‘Do ye become fordable’.

The circumstances of this miracle are, however, nowhere clearly expressed. Some amplifications may be gleaned from other works. The Bṛhaddevatā tell us that Viśvāmitra was accompanying Sudās, having been his priest at a sacrifice :

Purohitas sannijyārtham Sudāsā saha yan ṛṣiḥ /  
Vipāṭchutudryos sambhedam śam ityete uvāca ha //<sup>118</sup>

The Sarvānukramaṇī introduces the hymn (RV III 33) merely as a conversation between the rivers and Viśvāmitra, who was desirous of crossing—Samvādo nadibhir Viśvāmitrasyottitirṣoḥ.<sup>119</sup> Still the questions remain : whose wealth did Viśvāmitra take? and who are those others that followed him? The old texts have no answer to give. Durga however imagines that the wealth was earned by him in his capacity as priest (paurohityopārjitam); and that those who followed him were either his attendants or robbers (anuyayur itare tadanuyāyinas taskarā vā). Sāyaṇa, from the above sources reconstructs the story—

“Purā kila Viśvāmitraḥ Paijavanasya Sudāso rājñah purohito babhūva / Sa ca paurohityena labdhadhanah sarvam dhanam ādāya Vipāṭchutudryoḥ sambhedam āyayāvanuyayur itare / Athottitirṣur Viśvāmitro’ gādahajale te nadyau drṣṭvottaraṇārtham ādyābhis tisṛbhis tuṣṭāva ” //<sup>120</sup>

“In times of yore Viśvāmitra became the priest of king Sudās son of Pijavana. He, having obtained wealth from his priesthood gathered up all earnings and came to the confluence of Vipāś and Śutudrī; others followed him. Then desirous of crossing the stream whose waters were deep he praised the rivers to become

117. Nir. II 24 (p. 231 BSS edn.).

118. BD IV 106.

119. Sarvā. ed. Macdonell, p. 15-16. It is strange that Sadguruśiṣya does not narrate the story. He merely repeats the original—Uttitirṣor Viśvāmitrasya nadibhis saha samvādo'smin sūkte pratipādyate (Ib. p. 106).

120. Sāyaṇa's preface to RV. III 33.



fordable". This warrants a supposition that the people who followed were not friendly; they were perhaps intent on pursuing Viśvāmitra and Sudās who must also have been in the company, as vouchsafed by BD. It is agreed on all accounts, at any rate, that Viśvāmitra was the wonder-worker before whom the rivers gave way.

Yāska does not refer to any hatred between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. His commentator, however, refuses to comment upon the Ṛgvedic verse in which the word "lodham" occurs. "Lodham" is listed up in the Nighaṇṭu as one of the sixty-two words<sup>121</sup> which are known as anavagatas (not-understood). Explaining this word Yāska quotes the Ṛgvedic line—"lodhām nayanti páśu manyamānāḥ"—and says :

lodham "lubdham ṛṣim nayanti paśum manyamānāḥ". Durga upon this quotes the verse (RV III 53.23) in full and then refuses to comment upon it; because "the verse in which the word occurs is a Vasiṣṭha-hating one; I am a Kāpiṣṭhala-Vāsiṣṭha; hence, I do not explain it."<sup>122</sup> This of course, should be regarded as based on a tradition which Yāska did not share.

Yāska refers to the birth of Vasiṣṭha<sup>123</sup> and in that connection comments on the Ṛgvedic verse "Utāsi Maitrā-Varuṇó Vasiṣṭha"<sup>124</sup> Vasiṣṭha is said to be the son of Mitra and Varuṇa who once fell in love with Urvaśi at her very sight (in a sacrifice). Their semen dropped down and was held in a pitcher of water by the Visvedevas. Then Vasiṣṭha was born. The commentator Durga draws attention to the fact that Vasiṣṭha had more than one birth;<sup>125</sup> this is also supported by Ṛgvedic authority.<sup>126</sup>

Vasiṣṭha's loyalty to Indra along with others viz. Parāśara and Śatayātu is stated.<sup>127</sup> An interesting parable<sup>128</sup> is told of how Vasiṣṭha once praised Parjanya for rains. The frogs seconded him, whereby he was pleased and heartily complimented them in the following Ṛk—

Samvatsarām śaśayānā Brāhmaṇā vratacārīṇaḥ /  
Vācam Parjanyaajinvitām prā maṇḍūkā avādiṣuḥ //<sup>129</sup>

"The frogs pour forth aloud their praise which is pleasing to Parjanya, like Brāhmans after lying the whole year in observance of a vow."

121. Nigh. IV 1.16.

122. Nir. IV. 14 (BSS edn. pp. 380-381) Durga : "Lodham ityetaḍ anavagatam / lubdham ityavagamah / yasmin nigame eṣa śabdaḥ, sā Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇī ṛk /

123. Nir. V 14.

124. RV VII 33.11.

125. Nir. V. 14 Com. p. 525 f. BSS No. 73.

126. cf. RV VII 33.10-14.

127. Nir. VI 30. cf. RV VII 18.21.

128. Nir. IX 6. Vasiṣṭho varṣakāmāḥ Parjanyaṃ tuṣṭāva / Tam maṇḍūkā anvamodanta / Sa maṇḍūkān anumodamānān dṛṣṭvā tuṣṭāva /

129. RV VII 103.1 cf. Niti, 108, p. 239.

It is said further that Vasiṣṭha, unable to bear the sorrow of his sons' death, threw himself into the river having tied the body with thread. He wanted to die; but the river untied the bonds and he was destined to live. The river was henceforward named as Vipāś :

(Vipāṭ vipāśanād vā) / Pāśā asyām vyapāśyanta  
Vasiṣṭhasya mumūrṣataḥ / Tasmād Vipāḍ ucyate //<sup>130</sup>

The real name of the river is Ārjikiyā (having its source in the Rjika mountain ; flowing straight); it was formerly known as Uruñjirā (urujalā = full of water).<sup>131</sup>

Finally, Yāska is impressed with the great qualities for which the Vasiṣṭhas are known :<sup>132</sup> " Their glory is like the splendour of the Sun; their greatness vast like that of the ocean ; their swiftness is like that of the Wind and their praises always inimitable."

### *Bṛhaddevatā*

Mitrikṛtya janā viśve yad imam paryupāsate  
Mitra ityāha tenainam Viśvāmitra stuvan svayam //<sup>133</sup>

Because all men making friends with him resort to worship therefore Viśvāmitra (friend to all) himself praising him calls him Mitra (friend)."

One easily sees here a clue to Viśvāmitra's own name if not his character. The author of BD appears to commend the sage as a universal friend. Indeed, while praising the Sun-god<sup>134</sup> as a friend who urges all men to action as a friend who supports both earth and heaven as a friend who is vigilant in regard to the welfare of those who toil (kṛṣṭiḥ), Viśvāmitra undoubtedly may have had the God's example for his own emulation or guidance ! And we know from the legends that he always proved to be a friend of the distressed.

Of the seven names of the Sun, the God is reputed to have acquired the name Bhaga because the sage Vasiṣṭha praised him so :

Udito bhāsayamllokān imāś caīṣa svaraśmibhiḥ /  
Svayam Vasiṣṭhas tenainam ṛṣir āha stuvan bhagam //<sup>135</sup>

180. Nir. IX 26. Durga expands : Vasiṣṭhaḥ kila mamajjāsyām mumūrṣuḥ putramaraṇa-  
kṛtāḥ pāśair ātmānam baddhvā / Tasya kila te pāśā asyām vyapāśyanta vyamucyanta  
akena / Tataḥ prabhṛti Vipāṭ abhavat /

181. The Nirukta context is Yāska's comment on RV X 75.5 (Imām me Gange Yamune  
) vide Durga's com. on the word-exegesis. BSS Vol. 85 pp. 928-931.

182. Nir. XI 20. Athāpi ṛṣayaḥ stūyante / " Sūryasyeva vakṣatho jyotir eṣām etc." RV  
I 88.8.

183. BD II 49.

184. cf. RV III 59.1. " Mitro jānān yātayati bruvāno / Mitro dādharma prthivīm utā  
īm / Mitrah kṛṣṭir ānimiśābhī caṣṭe / Mitraya havyām ghrṭavaj juhota // . Vide Yāska's  
elation : Nir X 22. According to Sarvā. the deity of the hymn is Mitra who is generally  
ntified with Sun (see Sāyaṇa's com.). In the Bṛhaddevatā however it appears to be one of the  
ames of Indra, as pointed out by Macdonell (p. 89 of his Tr.; specially note on v. 82). These  
ames happen to coincide almost with those enumerated in Nigh. V 4 and 5. Therefore Mitra,  
its derivative sense, may apply to both Indra and the Sun.

185. BD II 62. cf. RV VII 41.2-5.

“ And he arose illuminating these worlds with his rays : therefore, the seer Vasiṣṭha himself, praising him, calls him Bhaga.”

The text of BD refers to Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha in a few contexts which are of no significance indeed for the study of their mutual relationship. Thus the character of the Vaiśvadeva hymns differs from seer to seer.<sup>136</sup> There is narāśamsa in Vasiṣṭha's Āpri hymns, while there is praise of Tanūnapāt in Viśvāmitra's.<sup>137</sup> The hymns of several seers are characterised by refrains ; but those of Kutsa differ in this regard from those of Bharadvāja, Ḡṛtsamada, Vasiṣṭha and others.<sup>138</sup>

That Viśvāmitra was first king and then elevated himself to the position of a Brahmarṣi is first clearly expressed by BD

Praśāsyā gām yas tapasābhyagacchat  
Brahmarṣitām ekaśatam ca putrān /  
Sa Gāthiputras tu jagāda sūktam  
Somasya metyāgneyam yat pare ca //<sup>139</sup>

“ The son of Gāthi who, after ruling the earth, attained by penance to the position of a Brahman-seer (Brahmarṣi) and obtained a hundred and one sons, uttered the hymn which is addressed to Agni ‘ Somasya mā ’ and the two following.” It is well-known that Viśvāmitra saw the whole of the third maṇḍala.

Viśvāmitra's conversation with the River Vipāś and Śutudrī and the successful crossing of their confluence in the company of Sudās have already been considered.<sup>140</sup> We may now pass on to other events of the sage's life.

According to BD, Viśvāmitra was once involved in an incident with the sage Śakti son of Vasiṣṭha, at a great sacrifice performed by Sudās. Viśvāmitra was forcibly deprived of consciousness ; he sank down unconscious. But to him the Jamadagnis gave speech called Sasarparī, daughter of Brahmā or of the Sun, having brought her from the dwelling of the Sun. Then that Speech dispelled Kuśika's loss of intelligence.

Sudāśaś ca mahāyajñe Śaktinā Gāthisūnave /  
Nighṛitam balāccetaḥ so'vasidad vicetanaḥ /  
Tasmai brāhmīm tu Saurīm vā namnā vācam sasarpārīm /  
Sūryakṣayād ihāhṛtya dadus te Jamadagnayaḥ /  
Kūśkānām tatas sā vāg amatim tām apāhanat //<sup>141</sup>

Sage Viśvāmitra goes down to history, as well as his redoubtable adversary Vasiṣṭha, on account of what BD styles as Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ which are four

136. Ibid. II 130-131.

137. Ibid. II 156 where Vasiṣṭha is referred to as Urvaśi's son (Aurvaśa) ; also II 157.

138. Ibid. III 128. Vide Macdonell's note on the stanza.

139. BD IV 95.

140. Ibid. IV 105-106. See supra, p. 212 of this.

141. BD IV 112-114. cf. RV III 53.15-16.

stanzas seen by Viśvāmitra and which are in the nature of imprecations against the enemy, who is presumed to be Vasiṣṭha. These mantras, though incorporated in the *R̥gveda-saṁhitā*, the Vasiṣṭhas do not hear. Great sin attaches to recite or hear them. Those who recite or listen to them will have their heads split into a hundred bits; their children will die; hence the said stanzas should not be uttered. The teachers approve of this course.

Parās catasro yās tvatra Vasiṣṭhadveṣīnyas smṛtāḥ /  
 Viśvāmitreṇa tāḥ proktā abhiśāpā iti smṛtāḥ /  
 Dviśaddveṣās tu tāḥ proktāḥ vidyās caivābhicārikāḥ /  
 Vasiṣṭhās tānna śṛṇvanti tad ācāryakasammatam /  
 Kīrtanācchravaṇād vāpi mahādoṣas ca jāyate /  
 Śatadhā bhidyate mūrdhā kīrtanena śrūtena vā /  
 Teṣām bālāḥ pramiyante tasmāt tās tu na kīrtayet /<sup>142</sup>

The *Bṛhaddevatā* commemorates Vasiṣṭha's greatness quite systematically commencing from his very birth. We shall recount the whole pedigree because of its interest. "The son of Prajāpati was Marīci, Marīci's son was the sage Kaśyapa. He had thirteen divine wives, the daughters of Dakṣa: Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kālā, Danāyu, Simhikā, Muni, Krodhā, Viśvā, Vasiṣṭhā. Surabhi, Vinatā and Kadrū by name; these daughters Dakṣa gave to Kaśyapa. From them, the Gods and Asuras, the Gandharvas, the Serpents, the Rākṣasas, Birds, Piśācas, and other classes of beings were produced. Now among these daughters, the one goddess Aditi produced twelve sons. They were—Bhaga, Aryaman, Anśa, Mitra and Varuṇa, Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, Vivasvat, Tvaṣṭṛ, Pūṣan, and also Indra; the twelfth is called Viṣṇu. Thus that pair was born of her namely Mitra and Varuṇa. When they saw the nymph Urvaśī at a sacrificial session, the semen of these two Ādityas was effused. It fell into a jar containing water. Now at that same moment, two vigorous ascetics, the seers Agatsya and Vasiṣṭha, came into being. The semen however, having fallen in various ways—in a jar, in water, on the ground—the sage Vasiṣṭha, the best of seers was produced on the ground; while Agastya was produced in the jar, and Matsya, of great brilliance, in the water. Then Agastya, of great glory, arose being the length of a peg only (śamyā). Because he was meted with a measure; he is here called Mānya; or else (because) the seer was born from a jar. For measurement is made with a jar also; by jar (kumbha) the designation of a measure of capacity is indicated. Then, as the waters were being taken up, Vasiṣṭha was found standing on a puṣkara (lotus?). There on every side the Viśvedevas supported the puṣkara. Arising out of that water, Vasiṣṭha then performed great austerity.

"His name arose with reference to his qualities. (guṇataḥ), from the root *vas* expressive of pre-eminence: for he once upon a time, by means of austerity, saw Indra who was invisible to other seers. Indra then proclaimed that he should receive shares in the Soma. This is supported by the *Brāhmaṇa* passage "Ṛṣayo

vā Indram..." Vasiṣṭha and the Vasiṣṭhas thus became Brāhmanas in the Office of Brahman priest, most worthy of fees in all rites and sacrifices. Therefore one should honour with fees all such descendants of Vasiṣṭha who may at any time even today be present at a sacrificial assembly, so says a sacred text of the Bhālavins."<sup>143</sup>

It becomes clear from the foregoing that the sage Vasiṣṭha was of divine origin, that he was favoured by Indra and that he and his tribe obtained universal recognition as Brahman priests.

Vasiṣṭha's dream is the next important event that BD would relate about him. This topic has been dealt with already in the above pages.<sup>144</sup> That a sage of Vasiṣṭha's eminence could break into another's house or that he had had to starve for three nights and steal into another's house on the fourth for food are surely things that can happen only in a dream! It has been clearly said to be a dream in BD—'Vasiṣṭhas svapna ācarat'—though Ṣaḍguruśiṣya misses the point and adds colour somewhat thoughtlessly. What, however, is important about the hymn is its magical aspect. It is called 'prasvāpinyupaniṣat', a spell which throws the concerned folk into slumber. Its efficacy as such was tested in the seer's own case!

143. BD. V 143-159.

Prājāpatyo Maricir hi Māricah Kaśyapo munih /  
Tasya devyo'bhavan jāyā Dākṣāyanyas trayodaśa /  
Aditir Ditir Danuḥ Kālā Danāyuḥ Simhikā Munih /  
Krodhā Viśvā Varishthā ca Surabhir Vinatā tathā /  
Kadrūś caiveti duhitṛh Kaśyapāya dadau sa ca /  
Tāsu devāsūrāś caiva Gandharvoragarākṣasāḥ /  
Vayāmsi ca Piśācāś ca jajñire'nyāś ca jātayah /  
Tatraikā tvaditir Devī dvādaśājanayat sūtān /  
Bhagaś caivāryamāmsāś ca Mitro Varuṇa eva ca /  
Dhātā caiva Vidhātā ca Vivasvāmsca mahādyutih /  
Tvaṣṭā Pūṣā tathaiwendro dvādaśo Viṣṇur ucyate /  
Dvandvam tasyāś tu tajjajñe Mitraś ca Varuṇaś ca ha /  
Tayorādityayos satre dr̥ṣṭvāpsarasam Urvaśim /  
Retaś caskanda tat kumbhe nyapatad vāsativare /  
Tenaiva tu muhūrtena viryavantau tapasvinau /  
Agastyāś ca Vasiṣṭhāś ca tatraṣi sambabhūvatuh /  
Bahudhā patite śukre kalaśe'tha jale sthale /  
Sthale Vasiṣṭhas tu munis sambhūta ṛṣisattamah /  
Kumbhe tvagastyas sambhūto jale Matsyo mahādyutih /  
Udiyāya tato'gastyāś śamyāmātro mahāyāsāḥ /  
Mānena sammīto yasmāt tasmān Mānya ihocyate /  
Yad vā kumbhād ṛṣir jātaḥ kumbhenāpi hi mīyate /  
Kumbha ityabhidhānam tu parimāṇasya lakṣyate /  
Tato'psu grhyamāṇāsu Vasiṣṭhaḥ puskare sthitah /  
Sarvatra puskaram tatra Viśvedevā adhārayan /  
Utthāya salilāt tasmād atha tepe mahat tapah /  
Nāmāsyā gunato jajñe vasateḥ śraishṭhyakarmāṇah /  
Adṛśyam ṛṣibhir hīndram so'paśyat tapasā purā /  
Somabhāgān atho tasmai provāca harivāhanah /  
Rṣayo vā Indram iti Brāhmanāt taddhi dr̥ṣyate /  
Vasiṣṭhāś ca Vasiṣṭhāś ca Brāhmaṇā Brahmakarmanī /  
Sarvakarmasū yajñeṣu dakṣiṇiyatamās tathā /  
Tasmād ye'dyāpi Vasiṣṭhāś sadasyāś syus tu karhicit /  
Arhayed dakṣiṇābhis tān Bhāllaveyī śrutis tviyam //

144. See supra footnotes 21-23.

A pathetic interest attaches to Vasiṣṭha's bereavement in the death of his sons. Moreover he seems to have been much sinned against; fiends of all sorts oppressed him. BD says—

Rṣir dadarśa rākṣoghnā putraśokapariplutaḥ /  
Hate putraśate tasmin Saudāsair duḥkhitas tadā /  
Rṣis tvāśiṣam āśāste mā no rakṣa iti tvṛci /

\* \* \*

Divi caiva pṛthivyām ca tathā pālanam ātmanah/  
Ulūkayātum jahyetān nānārūpān niśācarān /  
Pañcadaśyām tu sūktasya aṣṭamyām caiva Vāruṇiḥ /  
Duḥkhaśokaparitātmā śapate vilapanniva /  
Hate putraśate tasmin Vasiṣṭho duḥkhitas tadā /  
Rakṣobhūtena śāpāt tu Sudāseneti vai śrutiḥ //<sup>145</sup>

“The seer, when his hundred sons had been slain by the followers of Sudās, full of pain and overwhelmed with grief for his sons, saw this hymn for the destruction of demons. In the stanza ‘mā no rakṣaḥ,’ the seer invokes a blessing; and protection in heaven and earth on his own behalf. With “Ulūkayātum” etc., he prays “Slay these night walkers of various forms.” In the fifteenth and in the eighth stanzas of the hymn, the son of Varuṇa (Vasiṣṭha), his soul being overwhelmed with pain and grief, utters a curse. Vasiṣṭha was at that time pained, as his hundred sons had been slain by Sudāsa who, in consequence of a curse, had been transformed into a demon (rakṣas); such is the sacred tradition.” A little discrepancy confronts us here. Vasiṣṭha's hundred sons were killed, no doubt. But by whom? By the Saudāsas *i.e.* the followers of Sudās according to stanza 28 in the above quotation; or by Sudāsa transformed as a demon, according to stanza 34. We shall see that this incident gets further complicated in later literature, the epics and the Purāṇas.

### 3. *Sarvānukramaṇī*

The pedigree of Viśvāmitra given by the Sarvā, is noteworthy :

Kuśikas tvaishrathir Indratulyam putram icchan brahmacaryam cacāra tasyendra eva Gāthī putro jajñe Gāthino Viśvāmitraḥ ; sa tṛtiyam maṇḍalam apaśyat //<sup>146</sup>

Kuśika son of Iṣiratha, desirous of obtaining a son equal to Indra, did penance. Indra himself chose to be his son as Gāthī. Gāthī's son was Viśvāmitra who saw the third Maṇḍala of the Rgveda.

145. BD VI 28, 31-34.

146. Sarvā. p. 14. Sadguruśiṣya expands the same in verse—

Iṣirathasutas tvāsīt Kuśiko nāma nāmataḥ /  
Indratulyas suto me syād iticchannakarot tapaḥ /  
Brahmacaryam tu caratas tasmād Indro'bhyajāyata /  
Matsamo'nyo na caiva syād aham evāśya putratām /  
Gacchāmi samyagevam syād iti matvā śatakratuḥ /  
Sa Gāthī nāma Kuśikād Iṣirathasutād abhūt /  
Indrarūpād Gāthinas tu Viśvāmitro'pi jajñivān /  
Tṛtiyam maṇḍalam idam tapasā so'tha dṛṣṭavān //

RV III 33 is just pointed out as having been seen by Viśvāmitra as he was desirous of crossing the river ;<sup>147</sup> the circumstances are not mentioned. So also the two stanzas relating to Sasarpārī are indicated without any reference to the connected event.<sup>148</sup> But the commentator supplies the want.

Sasarpārīdvṛce prāhur itihāsam purāvidaḥ /  
 Saudāsanṛpayajñe vai Vasiṣṭhātmaja-Śaktinā /  
 Viśvāmitrasyābhibhūtam balam vāk ca samantataḥ /  
 Vasiṣṭhenābhibhūtas sa hyavāsīdacca Gāthijah /  
 Tasmai Brāhmīn tu Saurīm vā nāmnā vācam Sasarpārim /  
 Sūryaveśmana āhṛtya dadur vai Jamadagnayah /  
 Kuśikānām tatas sā vāg amatim tām apānūdat /  
 Upa preteti Kuśikān Viśvāmitro'nvayojayat /  
 Labdhvā vācam ca hr̥ṣṭātmā Jamadagnīn apūjayat /  
 Sasarpārīr iti dvābhyām r̥gbhyām vācam stuvan svayam //<sup>149</sup>

The details are very similar to those given in BD, if not borrowed therefrom.

Viśvāmitra's adoption of Śunaśśepa as the eldest of his sons under a new name Devarāta is of course a great event. While the Bṛhaddevatā is silent about it, Sarvā. refers to it briefly while introducing the Śunaśśepa hymns (RV I 24-30) :

Kasya pañconājigartīś Sunaśśepas sa kṛtrimo Vaiśvāmitro Devarātaḥ /<sup>150</sup>  
 The legend however is elaborately narrated by Ṣaḍguruśiṣya;<sup>151</sup> but it is unnecessary to review the same here as it has been done already in the preceding chapter on Śunaśśepa.

The birth of Agastya and Vasiṣṭha is mentioned while introducing the Agastya hymns commencing with RV I.166 :

Mitrā Varuṇayor dikṣitayor Urvaśim apsarasam dr̥ṣṭvā vāsativare  
 kumbhe reto'patat tato'gastya-Vasiṣṭhāvajāyetām /<sup>152</sup>

But the incident of Vasiṣṭha's son Śakti being consigned to the fire by the followers of Sudās receives a fuller treatment in the Sarvā. and its commentary. The Sarvā. says :

Saudāsair agnau prakṣipyamāṇaś Śaktir antyam pragātham ālebhe  
 so'rdharcā ukte'dahyata / Tam putroktam Vasiṣṭhas samāpayateti Śāṭyā-  
 yanakam Vasiṣṭhasaiya hataputrasyār̥ṣam iti Tāṇḍakam /<sup>153</sup>

Ṣaḍguruśiṣya weaves a graphic narrative out of this skeleton ; his source is not traceable. It may not be wrong, however, to suppose that he has mainly drawn

147. Samvādo nadībhir Viśvāmitrasyottitṛṣoḥ (Sarvā. p. 16 l line) the commentator is equally laconic.

148. ...Pañcadaśyādi dve vāce Sasarparyai (Sarvā. p. 16 l.11).

149. Sarvā. com. p. 107.

150. Ibid., p. 6.

151. Ibid., p. 48.

152. Ibid., p. 12 and p. 98.

153. Ibid., p. 25.

from imagination rather than from any authentic source : The passage speaks for itself—

Vasiṣṭhasya sutaḥ Śaktiḥ puṣpādyartham yayau vanam /  
 Rājñas Sudāso dāsās tu Vasiṣṭham dadṛśuś ca tam /  
 Viśvāmitraprayuktais tu rakṣobhir veṣṭitās ca te /  
 Vanāgnau prākṣipamś cainam devabhakto'yam ityuta /  
 Āstiko'yam Vasiṣṭhasya putra ityeva ca krudhā /  
 Prakṣipyamāṇas so'paśyad Indra kratum iti dvṛcam /  
 Ardharcam uktavān ādyam tato'dahyata so'gninā /  
 Cirāyamāṇe putre tu putrasnehapariplutaḥ /  
 Mārgavikṣiptanayano Vasiṣṭho'bhyāgamad vanam /  
 Dagdham sutam atha śrutvā bhūtebhyas śokakarśitaḥ /  
 Jñātvā tu drṣṭaśiṣṭam tu śikṣā nādi samāpayat /  
 Yadyardharecatrayam śiṣṭam adrakṣyan mama vai sutaḥ /  
 Ajīviṣyad ayam samyak sukhī ca śaradām śatam /  
 Ityuktvā dhṛtim ālambya prayayāvāśramam punaḥ /  
 Evam tu Śātyāyanakam vadanti brāhmaṇam kila /  
 Ādyārdharecam eva Śaktir drṣṭavān dagdha eva saḥ /  
 Dvṛcam sarvam Vasiṣṭhas tu drṣṭavān iti Tāṇḍakam /  
 Iti brāhmaṇavaimatyam vikalpāya pradarśitam /  
 Ataś ca // Indrakratum dvṛce Śaktir ādye'rdharce vikalpitaḥ /  
 Rṣir Vasiṣṭhas sūktasya devatā tvindra eva hi //<sup>154</sup>

In the above portraiture, one misses the divine grandeur or at least superhuman ability that usually attaches to a character like Vasiṣṭha. The young son being killed by the enemies lying in wait, when he was unguarded and specially when he was engaged in gathering flowers for worship, provides a background which is distinctly epic in style and conception. Vasiṣṭha's paternal care and anxiety are qualities too tame to be in conformity with the vigorous potentiality of a priest who was the guiding star of an advancing civilisation. It is said that the assassins were surrounded or supported by friends directed by Viśvāmitra. This entirely lacks authority or corroboration. Writing so late as the 12th century A.D. Sadguruśiṣya had deeply imbibed the popular tradition (reflected in the epics and the Purāṇas) that Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were inveterate enemies of each other and that they never lost any opportunity to wreak vengeance against each other. Hence whatever Vasiṣṭha's misfortune, Viśvāmitra was the cause and *vice versa*.

The fact that, as time rolls on, tradition also varies is borne out by the divergence between the Śātyāyanaka and the Tāṇḍaka.<sup>155</sup> Of the two ṛks in question, the story alleges that Śakti had seen or composed the first hemistich only when

154. Sarvā. pp. 180-81. *vide note 18 supra*.

155. In fact 'Īndra krātum na ā bhara' (RV VII 32.26--) is uttered by Vasiṣṭha for the sake of progeny (prajātyai). It is part of janitra-sāma. Observe that according to Nītimañjari of Dyā Dviveda, Śakti did not die ; he praised Indra and was saved. See *infra*.



he was consumed by the fire. The father came and saw the situation. In spite of grief, he exerted himself to complete the *dvṛca*. If only we go into the content of the two verses, we will be disappointed to find not a trace of sorrow reflected in it. Granting that Śakti had begun to compose an excellent hymn to Indra—a very worthy start indeed—

Índra krátum na á bhara  
Pitá putrébhyo yáthā /<sup>156</sup>

“Bring us wisdom, O Indra, as a father (imparts the same) to the sons.”—

It is indeed strange that the bereaved father's completion of the *dvṛca* does not reflect any grief and, therefore does not appear to have been composed with a heavy heart at all. This is how Vasiṣṭha saw—

Śíkṣā ṇo asmín Puruhūta yāmani  
Jivā jyótir aśimahi //  
Mā no ájñātā vṛjānā durādhío  
Māśivāso áva kramuḥ /  
Tváyā vayám pravátaś śásvatīr  
Apó'ti sūra tarāmasi //<sup>157</sup>

“Teach us at this sacrifice, O Puruhūta, so that we, living beings, shall enjoy light. Let no unknown, wicked, malignant, malevolent enemy overpower us. Protected by you, may we cross over many waters.” We have thus to conclude that the two mantras in question betray no clue to Vasiṣṭha's misfortune. We have only to respect the tradition.

The Sarvā. and the commentary do not throw fresh light on the Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyah; the latter reflects the information given by BD and reproduces one of the verses<sup>158</sup> (Śatadhā bhidyate mūrdhā etc.). The *prasvāpinyupaniṣat* has already been dealt with.<sup>159</sup>

The last hymn of the seventh maṇḍala is called Rākṣoghna *i.e.* “the demon-killer,” which is described as Śāpābhiśāpaprāyam<sup>160</sup> full of oaths and imprecations.” The text and the commentary are brief in their notice of this; there is no reference to the loss of Vasiṣṭha's hundred sons, which the BD and the several Brāhmaṇa texts point out quite frequently.<sup>161</sup>

#### 4. Nītimañjarī

The strange moralisations of the Nītimañjarī have already been familiar to us. We may note a few more examples.

156. RV VII 32.26<sup>ab</sup>

157. RV VII 32.26<sup>cd</sup> and 27.

158. BD IV 120.

159. *Supra* fn. 21-28.

160. Sarvā, p. 27.

161. BD VI 28; 31-34. RV VII 104. See *supra* and the sections on JUBr. PB etc.

A prolific parent comes to grief, indeed, like Viśvāmitra.

Rājaputro jaganmitro rājamānyo bahuprajah  
Sīdatyeva, Sudāso hi Viśvāmitro'harad dhanam //<sup>162</sup>

The author, Dyā Dviveda, comments—Yasmāt Sudāso rajño dhanam aharat (√hrñ haraṇe) acūcurad ityarthah. A strange interpretation, indeed, to say that Viśvāmitra robbed Sudās of his wealth? And what was the grief that befell Viśvāmitra, after all? He carried away the wealth that he had earned as priest; the rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī enabled him to cross over their confluence; and he and Sudās were quite safe :<sup>163</sup>

Having thus cast a slur on the *bona fides* of Viśvāmitra, witness the next lesson that the author draws :

Somapānam vinā nṛṇām brāhmaṇatvam na vidyate /  
Yadartham Gādhijo yaṣṭum dhanam hr̥tvāvadannadiḥ //<sup>164</sup>

And what does he tell the rivers? “Aham kuṭumbabharaṇād atiriktena dhanena somam sampādāyīṣyāmi!”—a bargain which did not become the priestly world of Rgvedic times.

One should attain one's object by all means, is the next lesson—

Nīcāir nīcataro bhūtvā kāryam sādhyam vicakṣaṇaiḥ /  
Gādhijah kārutām prāpya prabhur apyatarannadiḥ //<sup>165</sup>

Here ‘prabhurapi’ is somewhat dubious in its import. It may mean ‘king’ or, in an adjectival sense, ‘able.’ Though quite able, Viśvāmitra assumed the rôle of a flatterer and successfully crossed the rivers.

Quite a problem is raised by the following dictum—

Guṇaprasāmsayā kāryam mahatām mānavardhanam /  
Kṣipto'gnāvaribhiś Śaktir nendraprasāmsāyā mṛtaḥ //<sup>166</sup>

‘Great people should be further elevated in estimation by praising their virtues; it is thus that though thrown to the fire by the enemies, Śakti was not dead because of his praise of Indra’.

Dyā explains : Yathā pūrvam Śaktir Vasiṣṭhaputra ṛṣir Agnau jvālyamāne śatrubhis Saudāsair dahanāya kṣiptas san Indra kratum ityantena pragāthārdharcena Indram praśaśamsa śiṣṭena Vasiṣṭhaś ca / Tathā Indra-prasāmsayā Śaktir na mṛtaḥ / Tasmān mānavardhanam abhyudaya bhavati //<sup>166</sup>

162. Nītimañjarī pp. 147-148. stanza 65. (Nītimañjarī: ed. S. J. Joshi, published at Hari Har Maṇḍal, Kalabhairava, Benares City, 1938).

163. cf. Nir. II 24; Sarvā III 33; BD IV 105-6. R̥gvidhāna 177.

164. Nīti 66, p. 150 f.

165. Ibid 76, p. 152. f.

166. Ibid. 103, p. 225 and the com. thereon.

Dyā thinks that Śakti did not die whereas all the ancient works which refer to this incident declare that he did die. The *Brhaddevatā*<sup>167</sup> does not refer to Śakti's death but refers to the death of Vasiṣṭha's hundred sons caused by the Saudāsas. The *Sarvā.* states that Śakti was reduced to ashes,<sup>168</sup> having been thrown to the fire by the Saudāsas. Dya's rendering of the story is unauthenticated. The moral that the author propounds is too commonplace to require the remote authority of a Vedic event.

Strange things are conceived by this author *Dviveda*. For example,—

Kṛtāparādhaputrāṇām anyāyo na pitur hṛdi /  
Pāśadyumnasya yajñasya hantṛms tuṣṭāva Vāruṇiḥ //<sup>169</sup>

Sons' wrongs do not matter to the parent is a dictum in Dyā's conception—'Delinquency on the part of sons will not affect the heart of the father. Vasiṣṭha praised his sons who put an end to Pāśadyumna's sacrifice'. The story is that Indra was present at Pāśadyumna's sacrifice and was about to partake of the Soma juice which was being pressed. Just then the sons of Vasiṣṭha, officiating at another sacrifice, pronounced such fulsome praise as made Indra leave the ready cup of Soma at Pāśadyumna's and come away to the one conducted by the Vāsiṣṭhas.<sup>170</sup> Granting the efficacy of the prayers of the Vāsiṣṭhas, one is compelled to question the soundness of Indra's action—Indra a god who should yield to persuasion and betray one devotee to prefer another.

Convenient shelter for unlawful actions is provided by the following advice—

Kutumbe pīḍyamāne tu dharmān nekṣeta dharmavit /  
Vasiṣṭhas svāpayāmāsa yanmuṣe Vāruṇam janam //<sup>171</sup>

'The knower of Law should not observe the laws when the family is in distress. Vasiṣṭha sent all Varuṇa's people to sleep when he went there to steal': We shall amuse ourselves further by the author's comment—

Apyakāryaśatam kṛtvā bhartavyā ityuktatvāt / Vasiṣṭhavad akṛtyam  
api kṛtvā bhūṣaṇācchādanaiḥ kuṭumbam toṣayet //<sup>172</sup>

'Because it is said that (the family) shou'd be protected even by performing a hundred unwarranted deeds. One should please the family by means of ornaments and clothes, even committing a crime like Vasiṣṭha.' This recommendation is opposed to the original statement which permits a man to commit a crime when only the family is in distress. But Dyā means to suggest that even luxuries

167. BD VI 28, 31-34.

168. *Sarvā.* p. 25 on RV VII 32. In this hymn of Vasiṣṭha, the 10th stanza praises the gift of Paijavana Sudās, and the 26th is to be understood as having been connected with Vasiṣṭha's son Śakti's murder by Sudās's sons or followers. Something wrong with the tradition!

169. Niti 104, p. 228.

170. RV VII 83.2.

171. Niti 105, p. 280. Ref. RV VII 55, cf. fn. 21-28.

172. Śiṣya however concedes that the whole incident is based on story: "āśām prasvā-piṇitvam tu kathāsu parikalpyate" / v.1. kathām upari kalpatā. *Sarvā* p. 183.

may be provided by stealing. He misses on the one hand that according to Bṛhaddevatā, Vasiṣṭha was experiencing a dream and on the other, according to Ṣaḍguruśiṣya,<sup>173</sup> he entered Varuṇa's house because he was afflicted with hunger. It is perhaps a third dimensional development to bring in the family also, as a plea and excuse for crime !

The wise man must try to free himself from false allegations, just as Vasiṣṭha cleared himself by swearing and cursing :

Mithyāpavādabhaṅgāya prayateta vicakṣaṇaḥ /

Vasiṣṭhaś śapatham kṛtvā śāpam datvāmalo'bhavat //<sup>174</sup>

Vasiṣṭha happened to be once charged as 'yātudhāna' by a demon who posed himself as Vasiṣṭha. The situation became so embarrassing that the real sage had to swear his identity and then curse the evil demons. Sāyaṇa informs us as follows : atra kecid āhuḥ—<sup>175</sup>

Hatvā putraśatam pūrvam Vasiṣṭhasya mahātmanaḥ /

Vasiṣṭham rākṣaso'si tvam Vasiṣṭham rūpam āsthitaḥ //

Aham Vasiṣṭha ityevam jighāmsū rākṣaso'bravīt /

Atrottarā ṛco<sup>176</sup> dṛṣṭā Vasiṣṭheneṭi naḥ śrutam //

Thus attacked by the Rākṣasa who killed his hundred sons and who disguised himself as the sage, Vasiṣṭha had to swear

Adyā muriya yādi yātudhāno āsmi

Yādi vāyus tatāpa pūruṣasya /

Ādhā sā vīraīr daśābhir vīyūyā

Yó mā mógham yātudhānétyāha //<sup>177</sup>

"This day let me die if I am 'Yātudhāna' or if I ever injured the life of a man ; and he who falsely called me 'yātudhāna' shall be bereft of ten heroes (sons)."

The same incident affords another moral —

It is the nature of bad people to revile the good ; wicked indeed are those who called Vasiṣṭha a 'yātudhāna' :

Durjanānām svabhāvo'yam bhṛṣam nindanti yat sataḥ /

Vasiṣṭhasya durātmāno yātudhāneṭi ye'bruvan //<sup>178</sup>

173. R̥gvidhāna : Amīvaheṭi sūktena bhūtāni svapayen niśi /

Na hi prasvāpanam kiñcid idṛśam vidyate kvacit //

And Manu : Brāhmaṇas sarvavarṇebhya ādadāno na duṣyati /

Jivikātyayam āpanno yo'nnam atti yatas tataḥ /

ākāśam iva pañkena na sa pātena līpyate // (X 104)

Hence Dyā concludes : Tasmād Vasiṣṭhaḥ Kuṭumbārtham taskaro babhūveti siddham ! (Nīti, p. 286).

174. Nīti., 109, p. 240.

175. Sāyaṇa, on RV VII 104-12.

176. RV VII 104. 12-16.

177. RV VII 104.15.

178. Nīti. 110, p. 242.

Vasiṣṭha swears again—

Yó mǎ'yātum yātudhānétyāha  
Yó vā rakṣāś śúcir asmītyāha /  
Índras tám hantu mahatá vadhéna  
Vísvasya jantór adhamás padīṣṭa //<sup>179</sup>

He who calls me a fiendish demon (yātudhāna) when I am not one ; and he who calls himself Vasiṣṭha the pure, that demon may Indra smite with his great weapon ; and may he fall down beneath world's creation (*i.e.* to perdition).

To sum up : In these ancillary works which hold aloft the Vedic teaching and tradition, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, as usual, enjoy high reputation for their knowledge of the divine and for their superhuman achievements. Regarding their mutual relationship *viz.* enmity, there is direct expression in the Brhaddevatā, followed by the Sarvā., the commentators Durga and Sāyaṇa, and finally the Nītimañjarī. Only Yāska does not refer to it, though he had opportunity to do so while commenting on the word “lodha” which occurs in the verse regarded as a curse against the Vasiṣṭhas. It may therefore be concluded that this Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra feud acquired wide publicity and implicit belief by the time of the Brhaddevatā (400 B.C.)<sup>180</sup> so much so that society was prone even to expunge from the Vedic text the few verses known as ‘Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ.’ For according to BD. “they were pronounced by Viśvāmitra as imprecations ; the Vasiṣṭhas do not hear them ; with full approval of the teachers. Great sin arises from reciting or listening to them. With them recited or heard, the head splits into a hundred bits ; their children will die. Therefore one should not recite those verses.”

Parāś catasro yās tvatra Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyas smṛtāḥ /  
Viśvāmitreṇa tāḥ proktāḥ abhiśāpā iti smṛtāḥ /  
Vasiṣṭhās tā na śṛṇvanti tad ācāryukasammatam /  
Kīrtanācchravaṇād vāpi mahādoṣaś ca jāyate /  
Śatadhā bhidyate mūrdhā kīrtitena śrutena vā /  
Teṣām bālāḥ pramiyante tasmāt tās tu na kīrtayet //<sup>181</sup>

In fairness to Viśvāmitra, one wonders why, in the Vasiṣṭha-maṇḍala, no hymn or verse was styled Viśvāmitra-dveṣiṇyaḥ (Viśvāmitra-haters'), specially the Rākṣoghna-sūkta<sup>182</sup> which is full of oaths and imprecations (śapābhiśāpa-prāyam).<sup>183</sup> Was posterity, then, uncharitable to Viśvāmitra and partial to Vasiṣṭha ?<sup>184</sup>

179. RV VII 104.16.

180. BD ed. Macdonell (HOS. 5), p. xxii f.

181. BD IV 117-120.

182. RV VII 104.

183. Sarvā. p. 27.

184. See *supra*.

## V

## RĀMĀYAṆA

Popular tradition about the sage Viśvāmitra as well as the sage Vasiṣṭha finds systematic expression in the Rāmāyaṇa. The main events in the former's life are collected in the first book (Bālakāṇḍa 51-65). By the time of the Rāmāyaṇa, Viśvāmitra impresses us as a great Brahmarṣi of established reputation. He is one of the Seven Sages, who are Brahma's favourites and whose duty is to propagate righteousness in the world, to conduct sacrifices for public weal and also to cause, through proper agencies and timely intervention, the destruction of all evil. In this last aspect their task was to extirpate the demons who were a menace all over. Through so much of roughing of life in the mundane world and so much of austerity and penance to enjoy communion with the Absolute, these sages had become embodiments of peace and righteousness, always striving for the best fulfilment of God's purpose and man's emancipation. They were God's agents on earth as it were.

Thus came Viśvāmitra, once upon a time, to pay a visit to King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā (18).<sup>185</sup> Sage Vasiṣṭha was the latter's priest. Evidently the two sages had transcended all feelings of discord between themselves and knew and respected each other's merit.<sup>186</sup> So Viśvāmitra was received with great reverence and warmth. After the usual formalities, the holy sage proposed to take the young prince Rāma to guard his sacrifice against the attacks of Mārica and Subāhu (19). With great dismay the king begged him to leave the Prince behind ; in fact, his tender affection worked itself to such an extent as to drive him to refuse to comply with the wishes of the holy sage (20). Viśvāmitra got angry ; but, the far-sighted Vasiṣṭha intervened. For, being omniscient, he realised the high-minded purpose behind Viśvāmitra's proposal. Daśaratha had no alternative but to yield. Both princes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were handed over to Viśvāmitra (22).

During the short period when Viśvāmitra had the princes under his care, it may be discerned that he gave them the best training which stood them in good stead later in their life's ordeal. He instructed them in the most efficacious vidyās, namely Balā and Atibalā,<sup>187</sup> and also imparted to them the knowledge of rare and powerful weapons.<sup>188</sup> Their strength and mettle were also put to the test in the fight with Tāṭakā<sup>189</sup> and then with Mārica and Subāhu.<sup>190</sup> An acquaintance in

185. The figures in brackets indicate the relevant cantos in the Bālakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa (with com. Tilaka. N. S. Press, Bombay, 1902).

186. cf. Rām : I 18.47, 19.2, 19.14-15, 21.10-21 Daśaratha and Vasiṣṭha both refer to Viśvāmitra being a king before and then elevated to the rank of a Brahmarṣi by means of penance (Ibid. I 18.54-55, 21.13). Vasiṣṭha pays handsome compliment when he says of Viśvāmitra—Eṣa vighrahavān dharma eṣa vīryavatām varah / Eṣa vidyādhiko loke tapasaś ca parāyaṇam // (21.10)...Tenāśya munimukhyasya dharmajñāsya mahātmanah / Na kiñcid astyaviditam bhūtam bhavyam ca Rāghava // Ibid. 19.

187. Rām. I. 28.

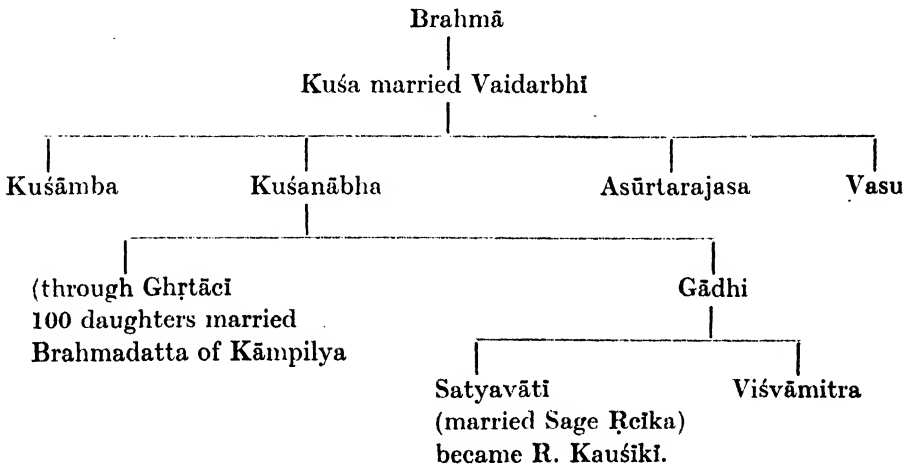
188. Ibid. I. 27-28.

189. Ibid. I. 80.

190. Ibid. I. 25-26.

their early age with the forests and the life therein was an asset. The stories related by Viśvāmitra are of absorbing interest ; they well speak of the sage's vast knowledge and experience. Above all the far-sightedness of the sage proved itself in the marriage at Janaka's capital between Rāma and Sītā. The Ahalyā incident<sup>191</sup> and that of lifting the Śiva-bow<sup>192</sup> inspired the future Saviour with confidence. Thus we see that Viśvāmitra very nobly discharged his obligations—if indeed they were obligations—to Daśaratha for having spared the services of Prince Rāma !

Viśvāmitra's past history is recorded as follows : Seated on the banks of the *Soṇā* in the company of other sages, on their way to Janaka's sacrifice, Viśvāmitra, in reply to Rama's question regarding the country through which they were passing, described his own pedigree.<sup>193</sup> Kuśa of great penance was the son of Brahma, and he got four sons through Vaidarbhi—namely Kuśāmba, Kuśanābha, Asūrtarajasa and Vasu. Kuśāmba founded the famous ancient city of Kauśāmbī. Kuśanābha built the city called Mahodaya, Asūrtarajasa built Dharmāraṇya, and Vasu founded Girivraja (Magadha). Now Kuśanābha got one hundred daughters through Ghṛtāci, they being subsequently married to Brahmadata of Kāmpilya. Kuśanābha then, performed a sacrifice for obtaining a son (putrakāmeṣṭi) and got, as reward a son named Gādhi. Viśvāmitra was the son of Gādhi, who had a daughter also, called Satyavati. Satyavati married sage Ṛciṅka and ascended heaven bodily along with her husband. She then reappeared as a great river called Kauśiki. Viśvāmitra made his permanent abode on her banks ; but just now had come to Siddhāśrama to perform the ten-night sacrifice. True to this statement we see that after Rāma's marriage, Viśvāmitra repairs to the Northern Mountains (jagāmottaraparvatam), to his old residence.<sup>194</sup>



191. Ibid. I. 48-49.

192. Ibid. I. 66-67.

193. Ibid. I. 82-84.

194. Rām. I. 74.1 Tilaka adds "Kauśikitaṭāvīchinnam," not separated from the banks of the River Kauśiki.

This genealogy is later corroborated by Śatānanda's statement--

Prajāpatisutas tvāsīt Kuśo nāma mahīpatiḥ /  
 Kuśasya putro balavān Kuśanābhas sudhārmikah /  
 Kuśanābhasutas tvāsīd Gādhīr ityeva viśrutah /  
 Gādheḥ putro mahātejā Viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ //<sup>195</sup>

Śatānanda was the chief priest of King Janaka and, he, therefore, very warmly welcomed Viśvāmitra and the princes. Having learnt of his mother Ahalyā's redemption by the grace of Śrī Rāma and in a spirit of thankfulness to Viśvāmitra for having been instrumental therein, Śatānanda describes to the princes the great exploits of the sage.

For many thousand years did Viśvāmitra of great glory rule the Earth. In one of his victorious marches, he, with all his army and retinue, met the sage Vasiṣṭha in his hermitage. After the formal reception, Vasiṣṭha invited the royal guest to partake of his hospitality. Viśvāmitra and his entire following were lavishly entertained, each one according to his taste, and were extremely pleased. All this miracle was accomplished by the one divine cow which was devoted to Vasiṣṭha. Such a wonderful thing – a gem indeed fit to be in royal possession<sup>196</sup> Viśvāmitra begged to have in lieu of a hundred thousand cows, horses, elephants, chariots, gold and precious stones. Vasiṣṭha would not part with the sacred cow for all this world. But the king demanded and tried to take her forcibly. Her own divinity supported by the sage's power of penance made it impossible for the royal intruder to gain his object. Thwarted again and again, Viśvāmitra felt most humiliated and began to smart under defeat and disgrace when all his martial glory proved absolutely of no avail (I 51-55). It is said that during the battle, a hundred of Viśvāmitra's sons attacked Vasiṣṭha with a variety of weapons, but they were all in no time reduced to ashes by a mere "hunkāra" from Vasiṣṭha (I 55.5 f.). Leaving the kingdom in charge of his sons,<sup>197</sup> Viśvāmitra did penance at the foot of the Himālayas to propitiate God Mahādeva, who ultimately granted him all the weapons available on earth at the command of gods and demons, Yakṣas and Gandharvas, and all. Armed fully in this manner, Viśvāmitra came back to wreak vengeance against his adversary. The hermitage was all destroyed; Vasiṣṭha accepted the challenge and with the help of his holy staff, set at naught the entire stock of his deadly weapons. Viśvāmitra was further humiliated with this defeat, so much so he burst out.

Dhig balam kṣatriyabalam brahmatejobalam balam /  
 Ekena brahmadaṇḍena sarvāstrāṇi hatāni me //<sup>198</sup>

195. Ibid. I 51. 18-19. Cf. Mbh. version the descent of Viśvāmitra which is somewhat different. Mbh. XII 49, XIII 4, see *supra* ch. III fn. 95.

196. 'Ratnam hi Bhagavannetaḥ ratnahārī ca pārthivaḥ' Ib. 53.9

197. Viśvāmitra had innumerable sons, evidently. A hundred were killed by Vasiṣṭha. We shall see later that while he was doing penance he got other sons Haviṣpanda, Madhuṣpanda and others. The latter name reminds us of Madhucchandasa, the R̥gvedic seer. See fn. 92 of previous chapter.

198. Rām. I. 56.23.



Viśvāmitra then determined to perform severe penance such as would entitle him to Brahmahood. But he did not free himself from his hatred to Vasiṣṭha. Accompanied by the queen-consort, he went to the southern region and did severe penance. Here were born to him sons, namely Haviṣpanda, Madhuspanda, Dr̥ḍhanetra and Mahāratha. After a thousand years, God Brahma declared his recognition of Viśvāmitra as a Royal Saint (Rājarsi). Disappointed, Viśvāmitra set himself upon further austerities.<sup>199</sup>

Meanwhile came Triśaṅku, King of Ayodhyā, seeking his help. It occurred to him once that he should sacrifice in such a manner as would elevate him bodily to heaven. Vasiṣṭha, of course, he approached for conducting such a sacrifice. Vasiṣṭha said such a thing is impossible. Then he approached Vasiṣṭha's sons who were doing penance in the south.<sup>200</sup> They also replied in the negative, whereupon Triśaṅku announced his intention to find other means of realising his object. The Vasiṣṭhas became angry and cursed him to become a caṇḍāla (an outcast). Overnight he was transformed and his counsellors and retinue ran away from him. Alone but determined, Triśaṅku came to Viśvāmitra and appealed for help in order to realise his object: "Fate, I think, is more powerful, man's strength is of no avail. Fate weighs over all and is the last resort. (I have thus been reduced to a miserable condition by Fate). Please therefore redeem me from ill Fate, by means of human endeavour."

Daivam eva param manye pauraṣam tu nirarthakam /  
Daivenākramyate sarvam daivam hi paramā gatiḥ /  
...Daivam puruṣakāreṇa nivartayitum arhasi //<sup>201</sup>

The sage was much moved to see the king's condition and it is not strange if his own frustration was also responsible to goad him on to espouse the cause of the distressed. And so Viśvāmitra resolved to fulfil the king's wish. But—

Kṣatriyo yājako yasya caṇḍālasya viśeṣataḥ /  
Katham sadasi bhoktāro havis tasya surarṣayaḥ /  
Brāhmaṇā vā mahātmāno bhuktvā caṇḍālabhojanam /  
Katham svargam gamiṣyanti Viśvāmitreṇa pālitaḥ //<sup>202</sup>

—Such doubts naturally would arise and the Vasiṣṭhas did level the charge when the invitation for the sacrifice was extended to them. An outcast is to sacrifice, for whom a Kṣatriya is the priest, how can the gods and the ṛṣis partake of the oblations in the assembly? And the revered Brāhmanas having enjoyed the hospitality given by an outcast, can they attain heaven under the protection of a Viśvāmitra? The insolence of this challenge was unbearable. Viśvāmitra cursed them all into a life of degradation for seven hundred births etc. By dint of his penance, the sacrifice was conducted according to rules; but the gods did not

199. Ibid. I. 57.9-10.

200. Rām. I. 57.

201. Ibid. I. 58.

202. Ibid. I. 59.13-15.

arrive to receive their share of the oblations. Filled with rage, Viśvāmitra declared the gift of all the merit of penance that he had so far earned and commanded Triśaṅku straightaway to fly to heaven. He did so, as all the assembly could see. But there in heaven Indra and the gods said that there was no place for him there ; and that, moreover he was condemned by the curse of his preceptor. Hence he should fall head downwards. Falling down he cried again to Viśvāmitra for protection. Then the sage grew terribly wrathful and, exerting all his supernatural powers, commanded him to stop there only in mid-air and began to create a separate heaven as if he were the Creator himself. Thus came into existence a separate group of Seven Sages and a Separate group of stars, etc. In a fit of anger, he began to proclaim :

“ Anyam Indram Kariṣyāmi loko vā syād anindrakaḥ ” “ I will produce another Indra or the world shall go without him ! ” In this grave situation, came forth all the gods, demons and sages to pacify Viśvāmitra. They struck a compromise that Triśaṅku and the new creation be recognised where they were as divinities outside the path of Vaiśvānara (Rām. I 60).

Viśvāmitra realised after the storm that his penance had been so obstructed in the South ; hence he moved on to the west to pursue his austerities near Puṣkara. Meanwhile an incident happened in Ayodhyā. The then king Ambariṣa began to sacrifice. Indra stole the victim (paśu). Either it had to be recovered and sacrificed or a human substitute found. In this situation the king wandered about and found the sage Rēika willing to part with a son of his, named Śunaśśepa for the price of a hundred thousand cows. We saw in the previous chapter how Śunaśśepa was taken by Ambariṣa, how, on the way at Puṣkara, the young ascetic secured the help of Viśvāmitra, in the shape of two gāthās to be recited at proper time and how in the end Śunaśśepa was released by the gods etc.<sup>203</sup> Viśvāmitra observed penance at Puṣkara for a thousand years at the end of which God Brahmā appeared and pronounced him a Ṛṣi (I 63.2).

Seeing that the goal was yet far, Viśvāmitra resumed austerities. But this time an impediment was placed by the Apsaras Menakā, of exquisite beauty, who came to bathe in the Puṣkara. The sage gave in to cupid's call and invited the nymph to live with him in the hermitage. What more did Menakā want than a success in her trade ? Ten years elapsed before the Ṛṣi realised his folly. He dismissed Menakā however with sweet words and wended his way to the Northern Mountain. There on the banks of the Kauśiki he did severe penance for thousands of years, which arrested the attention of all. Then, on the recommendation of all gods and sages, God Brahmā welcomed him as a Mahārṣi. His bid for the title of a Brahmarṣi was not favoured because he had not yet obtained full control over his senses (I 63).

Thus, again, Viśvāmitra had to return to penance, with renewed vigour and severity. With uplifted arms, supportless and subsisting on mere air, he entered

203. *Vide* ch. III on Śunaśśepa. fn. 76. *cf.* Rām. I 61 and 62.

upon another thousand-year austerity. In summer he observed the vow in the midst of five fires (four on four sides and one, the Sun-god, above); in the monsoons he stood in the open and in winter he remained in water day and night. Great concern was expressed in heaven, seeing such austerity on the part of Viśvāmitra. Indra decided to put him to the test and, this time, the onerous duty fell to the lot of the Apsaras Rambhā. Though she knew the risk, she had to obey Indra and succeeded in diverting the ascetic's attention by means of her charming beauty and sweet melody. But the sage soon realised that she was another trap set by Indra, again, and in rage, cursed her to ten thousand years of existence as a mountain (64). Giving vent to his anger in this manner, he found that he had suffered frustration once more.

Finally, we see Viśvāmitra embark upon the severest type of mortification and penance. He left the Northern regions and went to the East. For a thousand years the sage was engaged in very severe austerities and pledged to silence. He was reduced to a mere stick at the end. In spite of obstructions he never gave in for anger. At the end of the thousand years the vow of silence and starvation ended, and the sage would have a morsel of food on that day. Just when he was to partake of it, Indra in the guise of a divija came and asked for it. Without a moment's hesitation he gave all the food to the Brāhman. When nothing remained he did not mind nor said a word, but straightaway entered the last phase of his penance which was neither to eat nor even to breathe. Years lapsed and the mortification was such as the sage's head began to emit fumes. It was realised on all hands that he had stood the test. Brahmā came with all the gods and felicitated him as a BRAHMARṢI. Viśvāmitra paid homage to the God in all humility, but demanded that the Vedas, the sacred OM and Vāṣaṭ should favour him and that Vasiṣṭha should openly acknowledge his elevation. That of course Vasiṣṭha did with great pleasure. For when persons perceive Divine Light, there can be no bone of contention at all among them (65).

Those present listened to Viśvāmitra's past history with wrapt attention and amazement. Next day the great Bow of Śiva was shown to Rāma, who with permission, lifted it up with ease. The bow incidentally gave way. Rāma's performance was wonderful. As Janaka had avowed, arrangements were immediately set on foot to celebrate the marriage of Sitā with Rāma. Fleet-footed messengers were sent to Ayodhyā with invitations to king Daśaratha and all his train to come to Mithilā. Needless to say that it was a grand celebration. Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra having met again moved only as friends. With the former's approval, Viśvāmitra moved for the marriage of all the four sons of Daśaratha at the same time with the daughters of Janaka and his brother Kuśadhvaaja. After the great event, Viśvāmitra bidding farewell to the two kings returned to the Northern Mountains (66.78).

Before evaluating the Viśvāmitra-stories that appear in the Rāmāyaṇa, one point requires to be carefully remembered. From the point of view of critical scholarship, it is held that the first and the last books (*i.e.* Bāla and Uttara Kāṇḍas)

are not genuine to the original poem. Even so the narrative in question is a later interpolation. Granting this, nevertheless, these stories have their own value because they do stand anterior to many portions of the *Mahābhārata*, and most of the *Purāṇas*. For, according to Winternitz,<sup>204</sup> 'it is probable that the *Rāmāyaṇa* had its present extent and contents as early as towards the close of the second century A.D.' Reserving a comparative estimate of these chapters to a subsequent section, it must be said in appreciation that in no other work do we get a connected account of the events of Viśvāmitra's life. In itself the account provides a consistent biography of the sage, sufficient to portray in correct outline a great personality of Ancient Bhārata.

Vasiṣṭha is the well-known priest of the Ikṣvāku race. He is naturally held in high veneration. One finds that in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, there is not much of an outstanding nature in the life of the sage. His sincere devotion to the best interests of the royal house of Ayodhyā is evident. Sage Vāmadeva seems to be in close association with him. Other sages like Jābāli, Kāśyapa and even Viśvāmitra appear on occasions only. By the time of the epic, the personalities of the sages are made up. They are almost a type; they have had a great past with established holiness and reputation. The Creative period or the period of growth in the life and profession of the sages and the priests appears to have ended. They enjoy universal recognition as promoters of social well-being and divine grace. Their ultimate goal was Emancipation through penance, their earthly duty was to spread good-will and help the destruction of evil which harassed the world in the form of fiends and demons.

## VI

### MAHĀBHĀRATA

The theory of later interpolations notwithstanding, it must be conceded that the main theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is allowed to run smoothly without being interrupted by endless stories, discourses and disputations, as is the case with the other epic, the *Mahābhārata*. Between the two epics, the growth of which was surely simultaneous for a few centuries at least, all efforts at elaboration seem to have concentrated on the *Mahābhārata*. Ultimately it became a *magnum opus* whose grandeur in volume and variety has never been, nor is ever likely to be, surpassed. All that was popular in tradition as regards learning, legend, philosophy, statecraft, and the temporal and spiritual life of the land, came to be incorporated in it. We shall therefore look for exhaustive information in this work about Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, their mutual relationship as well as their individual greatness.

The Age of the *Mahābhārata* envisages a state of fulfilment that crowned the austerities of the Rṣis. Sages and ascetics pursuing a life of renunciation and seclusion in the forest abodes is still a familiar feature of the *Mahābhārata* life.

204. Cf. Winternitz, *HIL* Vol. I (Calcutta) p. 516.

But Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra and others of their category belonged to the hoary past as it were. By virtue of their penance, they had achieved a kind of omniscience, they were immortal. On all occasions of great moment they would be present with Indra, Brahmā and other gods. Thus we find numerous references in the Mbh. to the fact that Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were among the Seven Sages (Saptarṣis) who generally reside in the North.<sup>205</sup> The following were present, for instance, at the time of Arjuna's birth : Saptā caiva maharṣayah—

Bharadvājaḥ Kaśyapo Gautamaś ca Viśvāmitro Jamadagnir Vasiṣṭhaḥ /

Yaś codito Bhāskare'bhūt prapaṣṭe So'pyatrātrir bhagavān ājagāma //

(I 123.51)

They were again among those who surrounded Bhīṣma,<sup>206</sup> when he was lying on the bed of arrows. Vasiṣṭha's name is specially associated with Bhīṣma, who obtained from him the knowledge of the Vedas and their branches (vedāṅgas)<sup>207</sup> and who is described as (Vasiṣṭha-śikṣita) Vasiṣṭha's pupil.<sup>208</sup> This looks somewhat strange when we are told that Bhīṣma was one of the Vasus, named Dyaus, born on earth on account of Vasiṣṭha's curse, the offence being that in one of their perambulations, Dyaus caused Vasiṣṭha's sacred cow (homadhenu) to be taken away from the sage's hermitage.<sup>209</sup> Vasiṣṭha cursed the Vasus saying that they

205. Mahābhārata references in this section are to be found in the Citrasālā Edition, Poona, with Nīlakaṇṭha's commentary called Bhārata bhāvadīpa. Vas. and Viś. among the seven sages of the North will be found in Mbh. I 123.51, 233.29, III 163.15, 224.26, XII 122.31, 208.32-33, 335.29, XIII 93.88,96 ; 126.42-49, 150.38-39, 165.44, XIV 27.18 etc., etc.

206. Mbh. XII 47.7, XIII 26.4, 5.

207. Ibid. I 100.35-39.

Vedān adhijage sāṅgān Vasiṣṭhād eṣa vīryavān /

Kṛtāstrāḥ parameṣvāso devarājasamo yudhi //

208. Ibid. XII 37.11.

Bhārgavāc Cyavanāc cāpi Vedān aṅgopabṛmhitān /

Pratipede mahābāhur Vasiṣṭhāc caritavratāḥ //

It is interesting to note that Bhīṣma was reputed to have seen in person Indra and other gods (sākṣād dadarśa yo devān sarvān Indrapurogamān) ; he saw the devarṣis many times (asakṛt), obtained knowledge of things from the very propounders of śāstras : thus Uśanas taught him Rājadharmā, as also Brhaspati, the preceptor of the gods, Veda and Vedāṅgas he learnt from Vasiṣṭha and Cyavana, adhyātma from (Sanat) Kumāra, yatidharma from Mārkaṇḍeya, weapons from Rāma (Jāmadagnya) and Śakra. He would meet Death by his own will (Ibid. XII 37.8-16).

In another context Kṛṣṇa pays him great compliment. He urges Yudhiṣṭhira to visit Bhīṣma on his bed of arrows and learn from him higher knowledge :

Tasminnastamite Bhīṣme Kauravāpām dhurandhare /

Jñānānyastam gamiṣyanti tasmāt tvām codayāmyaham //

Cāturvidyam cāturihoṭram cāturāśramyam eva ca /

Rājadharmāmś ca nikhilān pṛchainam pṛthivīpate //

209. Mbh. I 98.19.

Ime'stau Vasavo devā mahābhiḡā mahaujaśaḥ /

Vasiṣṭhaśāpadoṣeṇa mānuṣatvam upagatāḥ //

The details of the incident are given in the next canto (I 99). Āpava Vasiṣṭha, having cursed them to a life on earth, relents indeed when the Vasus pleaded guilty. So he revised the curse :

"Anusamvatsarāt sarve śāpamokṣam avāpsyatha /

Āyam tu yatkrte yūyam mayā śaptāḥ sa vatsyati /

Dyaus tadā mānuṣe loke dīrghakālam svakarmanā //

(Ibid. I 99.38-39).

should be born on earth, but added that only Dyaus should dwell on for a long time. Story goes on to say that the Vasus prevailed upon the divine river Gaṅgā, that she, having borne them to king Śāntanu, should throw them into the water, except the eighth. This eighth child was Devavrata otherwise known as Bhīṣma.<sup>210</sup>

Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are mentioned among the great sages who expect Yudhiṣṭhira to visit them during his pilgrimage.<sup>211</sup> With the sage Lomaśa for his guide, the exile king visited their āśramas, which may be regarded as their permanent abodes for all time.<sup>212</sup> Situated as these were on river banks, they were rendered holy by the austerities of the saints and were reputed as holy places of pilgrimage.<sup>213</sup> Ācārya Droṇa invoked the blessings of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra on Duryodhana for a victory over Arjuna.<sup>214</sup> Later as the Great Battle progressed, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were among the Seven Sages who came to carry away the departed Droṇa to Heaven.<sup>215</sup> The Bisastainyopaniṣat (the mystery of the theft of the lotus stalk) records a peculiar experience for the Seven Sages who went round on a tour. They were once confronted by a Yātudhāni who intending to kill them, put them to a test when they were all hungry and thirsty and wanted to refresh themselves with the lotus stalks and water in a lake over which she kept watch. Each one of the party was to announce his or her name, (Arundhati also accompanied them), which was done with a certain sense of humour. Incident-

210. Ibid I 96. 15-19.

Na tacchakyam nivartayitum yaduktam brahmavādinā /  
Tvam asmān mānuṣi bhūtvā sṛja putrān vasūn bhuvi /  
Na mānuṣiṇām jaṭharam praviśema vayam śubhe /

\*

\*

Pratīpasya suto rājā Śāntanur lokaviśrutaḥ /  
Bhavitā mānuṣe loke sa naḥ kartā bhaviṣyati /

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\*

Jātān Kumārān svān apsu prakṣeptum vai tvam arhasi /  
yathā na cirakālam no niṣkṛtiḥ syāt trilokage /

Ibid. I 99.45-7 (Later) Gaṅgā to Śāntanu :

Ayam śāpād ṛṣes tasya eka eva nṛpottama /  
Dyau rājan mānuṣe loke ciram vatsyati Bhārata /  
Sa tu Devavrato nāma Gaṅgeya iti cābhavat /  
Dyunāmā Śāntanoḥ putras Śāntanor adhiko guṇaiḥ //

211. Ib. II 85.119-120. Ete ṛṣivarāś sarve tvatpratiksāś tapodhanāḥ.

212. Ib. III 110.20,22. The āśramas or hermitages are mentioned in several contexts.  
cf. I 215.2 (Vasiṣṭhasya ca parvatam), III 82.50, 102.3 etc.

213. Ib. III 82.56 (a Vas. tīrtha on Mt. Arbuda), 83.139 (Viś. tīrtha, bathing where, one becomes a Brāhman), 179 (Badarapācana of Vas.), 84.48 (Vas.), 131 (Kauśiki), 87.13 (Utpalāvana Viś. became Brahman), 130.17 (Ujjānaka, Vas. with Arundhati).

214. Mbh. 94.39 et. seq. Sañjaya uvāca—(to Dhṛtarāṣṭra)

Evam uktvā tvaṇ Droṇaḥ sprṣṭvāmbho varma bhāsvaram /  
Ābabandhād bhutatamam japan mantram yathāvidhi /  
Rane tasmin sumahati vijayasya sutasya te /  
Visismāpayiṣur lokān vidyayā bramhavitamāḥ /

\*

\*

Asito Devalas caiva Viśvāmitras tathāṅgirāḥ /  
Vasiṣṭhaḥ Kaśyapaś caiva svasti kurvantu te nṛpa //

215. Ibid. VII 190.83.

ally, Viśvāmitra introduces himself as a friend of the Viśvedevas and of the Kine ; Vasiṣṭha is most excellent and he lives as a great householder.<sup>216</sup> The Yātudhāni was, of course, killed by a wayfarer called Śunassakha<sup>217</sup> (accompanied by a dog) who joined them on the way and was no other than Indra in disguise ! The sages figure again in a similar funny incident which may be called “ Puṣkarastainya ” (stealing of the lotus), but designated ‘ Śapathavidhi ’ in the books. Here again comes Indra to solve the mystery. The sages of earth and heaven swore by many things sacred to say that they did not commit the theft of the puṣkara. Indra was the thief, of course, and apologised in the end that he devised this incident in order to hear from them the acts and principles of Dharma, by which they swore, but which, as the world could realise, constituted the basis of all righteousness.<sup>218</sup>

Viśvāmitra is mentioned among departed kings, who lived a glorious life on earth, performed sacrifices, and ascended heaven, as enumerated by Sañjaya to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, so that he might take consolation in his sad bereavement.<sup>219</sup> Further, Viśvāmitra as a king who became a Brahmarṣi by his austere penance is often times remembered in the Mahābhārata.<sup>220</sup> He is also credited with doing a good

216. Ibid. XIII 93—

Viśvedevāś ca me mitram mitram asmi gavām tathā /  
Viśvāmitram iti khyātam yātudhāni nibodha mām //  
Vasiṣṭho'smi variṣṭho'smi vase vāsagrheṣvapi /  
Vasiṣṭhatvāc ca vāsāc ca Vasiṣṭha iti viddhi mām //

Cf. Nilakanṭhīya : vāsagrheṣu vāsayogyeṣu grhasthāśrameṣu / The touring party consisted of the seven sages with the revered Arundhati, a maid servant named Gaṇḍā and her husband Paśusakha.

217. Ibid XIII 93.106—Śunassakha declares himself thus before the Yātudhāni—

Ebhīr uktam yathā nāma nāham vaktum ihotsahe /  
Śunassakhasakhāyam mām Yātudhānyavadhāraya //

Com. śvā dharmāḥ / tatsakhāyo munayaḥ, teṣāṃ sakhā śunassakhasakhah (Indrah). Yama, the God of Dharma, appearing as a dog is a familiar feature. The dog that followed Yudhiṣṭhira in his final journey was Dharma himself. In the present context it happens that the wandering mendicant (Śunassakha) was accompanied by a dog. In reality he was Indra in disguise, and Indra is named Śunāsira which has some Vedic basis. It is interesting to study the semantic history of the words Śunam and śvan. An attempt is made in the foregoing chapter on Śunāsīpa.

218. Mbh. XIII 94. Here also was a party on pilgrimage, but consisted of royal saints as well as the Brāhman saints. Indra said in the end—Na mayā bhagavan lobhāddhṛtam puṣkaram adya vai / Dharamāms tu śrotukāmena hṛtam na krodhdum arhasi //

219. Mbh. I 1.227 (Viśvāmitram amitragnam Ambariṣam mahābalaṃ). Again (XIV 91.34) Śrūyante hi purā vṛttā Viśvāmitrādayo nṛpāḥ / Viśvāmitro'sitas caiva Janakaś ca mahīpatiḥ /

220. I. 71.29 (Kṣatrajātaś ca yaḥ pūrvam abhavad brāhmaṇo balāt). This appears to be an anomaly, however. The context is Indra deputing Menakā to obstruct Viśvāmitra's penance ; Menakā pleads fear of a sage of such attainments. Viśvāmitra became a Brahmarṣi only after transcending earthly passions. Here he succumbs to Menakā's blandishments and begets Śakuntalā, the immortal heroine of Kālidāsa's masterpiece. Compare, further, (a) Mbh. I 137.14 (Viśvāmitra is an example of Brāhmanas born of Kṣatriyas :

Kṣatriyebhyaś ca ye jātā Brāhmanās te ca te śrūtāḥ /  
Viśvāmitraprabhṛtayaḥ prāptā brahmatvam avayam //

(b) I 175.47-48. By means of penance Viśvāmitra obtained success, having paralysed the worlds with his brilliance ; he attained Brāhmanhood, what is more, partook of the soma in Indra's company (Apibacca tatas somam Indreṇa saha Kauśikah). (c) III 87.13, 15-17. It was on the banks of the Kauśiki that Viśvāmitra, rich in penance, became a Brahman. He then celebrated many sacrifices on the Ganges, in the pāñcālas at Utpalāvana, and even at Kānyakubja

turn to the wives of six of the Seven Sages, the exception being Arundhati. It happened that the God of Fire fell in love with the wives of the divine sages, while coming out of a sacrificial rite which the gods were performing in order to find a suitable general for the divine army.<sup>221</sup> Finding it delicate to make advances to those innocent souls, he tried to derive pleasure by seeing and touching them in his capacity of the Gārhapatyā Fire.<sup>222</sup> Not satisfied with this, however, he repaired to a forest to do away with himself. But Svāhā, daughter of Dakṣa, who had

where he quaffed soma with Indra and declared that he a ksatriya had risen high to become a Brāhmaṇa (Kānyakubje'pibat somam Indreṇa saha Kauśikāḥ / tataḥ Kṣatrād apākramāt Brāhmaṇo'smīti cābravīt //). (d) V 106.18. It is said that Viśvāmitra in the final stages of his austerities stood the test of Dharma who appeared in the guise of Vasiṣṭha; from the state of Kṣatriya, Viśvāmitra attained the state of a Brāhmaṇa (Kṣatrabhāvād apagato brāhmaṇatvam upāgataḥ / Dharmasya vacanāt prito Viśvāmitras tathā'bhavat //). (e) IX 39.25,37. Balarāma during his tour came to the hermitage of Ruṣangu on the banks of Sarasvatī where Ārṣṭiṣeṇa did penance and where also Viśvāmitra attained brāhmaṇhood. Sindhudvīpa and Devāpi also became Brāhmaṇas at this holy place. (f) XIII 3.2; 4.48. In answer to a question by Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīṣma explains the lineage of Viśvāmitra and how he became a Brahman. He means to suggest that apart from his achievements, there was Brahman in his blood, he having been born by the grace of the sage Rciḥka (XIII 4). Further, Viśvāmitra, Bhīṣma informs, founded a race of Brahmanavādins; 62 sons of them are named—

Viśvāmitram cājanayad Gādhibhāryā Yaśasvinī /  
Rṣeḥ prasādād rājendra brahmaṇṣeḥ brahmanavādinam //  
Tato brāhmaṇatām yāto Viśvāmitro mahātapāḥ //

(g) XIII 18.16 f. Viśvāmitra is said to have declared to the son of Pāṇḍu that he became a Brāhmaṇa by the grace of Śiva. Other sages in turn relate how they were favoured by this God, the purpose of all being to bring home to Yudhiṣṭhira the efficacy of worshipping Śiva. (h) XIII 80.2. (i) XIII 55.31, 56.12 ff. Once in Gods' assembly, Brahmā declared that there will be Brahma-Kṣatra admixture in the Kuśika race. Sage Cyavana heard this, determined to destroy the whole race before the thing could happen, and, with the privilege of his being a sage, put king Kuśika to untold hardship. He wanted to find some pretext by which he could curse him to extinction. But Kuśika's steadfastness and devotion were remarkable. So Cyavana, believing in the inevitable, came to favour him. The third in his line would become a Brāhmaṇa (Tṛtiyam puruṣam tubhyam brāhmaṇatvam gamiṣyati st. 31). Further questioned by Kuśika, Cyavana explained that his grand-daughter would bear a Brāhmaṇa with Kṣatriya instincts and that his son Gādhi would be favoured with Viśvāmitra for his son, a Kṣatriya with Brāhmaṇa achievements.

Gādher duhitaram prāpya pautrīm tava mahātapāḥ /  
Brāhmaṇam Kṣatradharmāṇam putram utpādayiṣyati /  
Kṣatriyam viprakarmāṇam Bṛhaspatim ivaujaśā /  
Viśvāmitram tava kule Gādheḥ putram sudharmikam /  
Tapasā mahatā yuktam pradāsyati mahādyute // (st. 11-13).

(j) XIII 106.68. Commending the upavāsavidhi (vow of fasting) Bhīṣma cites the instance of Viśvāmitra who attained Brahmanhood by sustaining himself on a single meal (a day ?) for a thousand celestial years :

Divyavarṣasahasrāṇi Viśvāmitreṇa dhīmatā /  
Kṣāntam ekena bhaktena tena vipratvam āgataḥ //

<sup>221</sup>. Represented as Brahma's daughter, Devasenā, the other daughter being Daityasenā who was carried away by the demon Keśin. (III 224.1).

<sup>222</sup>. It is well-known that in the Gṛhya rites, the householder is always accompanied by the wife (samanvārabdhā).

Bhūyas sañcintayāmāsa na nyāyāyāṁ kṣubhito hyaham /  
Sādhvyāḥ patnyo dvijendrāṇām akāmāḥ kāmāyāmyaham /  
Naitāś śakyā mayā draṣṭum spraṣṭum vāpyanimitataḥ /  
Gārhapatyam samāviśya tasmāt paśyāmyabhikṣaṇaḥ /  
Samsprśanniva sarvās tāḥ śikhābhīḥ kāñcanaprabhāḥ /  
Paśyāmāṇas ca mumude gārhapatyam samāśritāḥ //



in vain loved him, now resolved upon assuming the guise of the wives of the seven ṛṣis. Svāhā first gratified her desire in the guise of Śivā the wife of Aṅgiras, and then, lest somebody should unduly suspect the Brāhmaṇa ladies, she went out of the forest as a bird (suparṇī), and on the Śveta mountain that was covered with lumps of reeds and guarded by serpents, monsters and fiends, she threw the semen which she held in her hand into a golden basin. Then assuming successively the form of five of the others, she did the same on the first lunar day (pratipat). Only the form of Arundhatī she was unable to assume because of her ascetic merit and devotion to her husband. The semen thrown on the Śveta mountain produced a child, whom the Ṛṣis called Skanda, with six heads.... Terrific prodigies were seen everywhere. Everybody accused the wives of the six sages, others accused the female eagle as being the cause thereof, but nobody suspected Svāhā. The Ṛṣis divorced their wives with the exception of Arundhatī, though Svāhā claimed the child as hers. Viśvāmitra, having concluded the sacrifice of the seven ṛṣis, had secretly followed the god of fire and knew everything as it had happened. He sought the protection of Skanda and performed for him the thirteen auspicious rites of childhood. Though Viśvāmitra informed the seven ṛṣis of the innocence of their wives yet they abandoned them unconditionally.<sup>223</sup>

Viśvāmitra had a very devoted pupil in the person of Gālava.<sup>224</sup> This pupil happened to serve him loyally even in his difficult circumstances. Finally Viśvāmitra blessed him to go, but Gālava requested the teacher to state the fee (gurudakṣiṇā). The teacher was content but the earnest pupil pressed his request. With a little displeasure as it were, Viśvāmitra asked Gālava to present him with 800 white horses with one ear black.<sup>225</sup> This was an impossibility. When he was feeling desperate, Suparṇa came to his assistance. He offered to take him on his back anywhere he wished, so that he might collect the rare type of animal from several kings and then meet the wishes of his teacher. After much wandering, they came to king Yayāti of Pratiṣṭhāna and Suparṇa made the request on behalf of Gālava. His recommendation was weighty, but Yayāti had no horses of that description. He offered, instead, his beautiful daughter Mādhavī, setting whom as price, they could easily get the 800 horses from kings who have them. Seeing her beauty kings would even part with their kingdoms.<sup>226</sup> At this stage when some way to success was found Suparṇa took leave of Gālava. With the maiden Mādhavī then, Gālava set out and went to Haryaśva king of Ayodhyā, who was childless.

223. Mbh. III Chs. 224 to 226, relevant portions. Viśvāmitra himself being one of the seven sages, he at least must have granted pardon for his wife! cf. Rām. I 36-37 regarding the birth of Skanda. The version is brief, there is no reference to the sages' wives being involved.

224 Mbh. V Chs. 106 to 119—Gālavacarita.

225. Ekataḥ śyāmakarṇānam hyānām candravarcasām /  
Aṣṭau śatāni me dehi gaccha Gālava mā ciram // Mbh. V. 106.27.

226. Iyam surasutaprakhyā sarvadharmopacāyini /  
Sadā devamanuṣyānām asurānām ca Gālava /  
Kāṅkṣitā rūpato bālā sūtā me pratigṛhyatām /  
Aśvās ūlkam pradāsyanti nṛpā rājyam api dhruvam /  
kim punaś śyāmakarṇānam hayānām dve catuśśate //  
(V. 115.11-18).

There he offered him the maiden for the price of 800 white horses with one ear black. The king had only two hundred and therefore proposed that he would beget only one son by her. Mādhavi revealed to Gālava that she had a boon from a sage that she would revert to virginhood after every childbirth, and that he might collect the required number from four kings if he liked. Readily the terms were accepted. Haryaśva got a son Vasuprada by name. From Haryaśva, they went to Divodāsa of Kāśī and then to Auśinara<sup>227</sup> of Bhojanagara. But a fourth king they could not find. Suparṇa came again and advised that he should take the collection hitherto made to Viśvāmitra and offer Mādhavi herself in lieu of the balance due, if that would please him. It was timely advice ; Viśvāmitra was pleased and in fact asked why he did not offer her first to him ; he could have got four sons to propagate his race!<sup>228</sup> It is said that Viśvāmitra was pleased to beget a son (Aṣṭaka) on Mādhavi and discharge the pupil of his obligations. The virgin was then restored to her father Yayāti, and Gālava went to penance.

On account of Viśvāmitra, it is reported that Indra lost his testicles which afterwards were substituted with those of a ram.<sup>229</sup>

In the thirty-sixth year after the Battle, a few sages, Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada happened to visit Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa's city. Seeing this, some young men of the Vṛṣṇi clan, Sāraṇa and others, tried to insult them. They dressed one among themselves (Sāmba) as a woman and asked the sages what kind of child she would bear forth. Discovering their trick, the sages cursed them to destruction : that Sāmba would bring forth an iron club which will cause the destruction of the Vṛṣṇyandhakas except Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa ; Dvāraka will be overwhelmed by the sea ; Death stalks the city, which has become demoralised, the people, giving way to drink at a festival, slay one another.<sup>230</sup>

The Pativratopākhyāna records<sup>231</sup> an amusing story of how a woman taught the Brāhman Kauśika that a wife's chief duty is to her husband, even before Brāhmaṇas. Once a Brāhman, Kauśika by name, learned in the Vedas and the

227. Auśinara's son was the famous king Śibi (118.20) Divodāsa's son was Pratardana.

228. ॐ Kim iyaṃ pūrvam eveha na dattā mama Gālava /  
Putrā mamaiva catvāro bhavyeṣu kulabhāvanāḥ /  
Partigṛhṇāmi te kanyāṃ ekaputraphalāya vai /  
Aśvās cāśramam āśādy carantu mama sarvaśaḥ //  
(119.16-17).

229. Mbh. XII 342.23.

Ahalyādharsaṇanimittam hi Gautamāddharmīśmaśrutām Indrah prāptaḥ Kauśikanimittam cendro muṣkaviyogam meṣavṛṣaṇatvam cāvāpa // How Kauśika comes in this Indra-Ahalyā incident is not clear. Sorensen thinks that Indra was reduced to that state by the curse of Viśvāmitra (Kauśikanimittam). Index Vol. II, p. 729. According to the Rāmāyaṇa, it was Gautama's curse that made him 'viphalā' (petatur Vṛṣṇau bhūmau sahasrākṣasya tatkṣaṇāt). Then the gods under the leadership of Agni "utpāṭya meṣavṛṣaṇau sahasrākṣe nyaveśayan." (Rām. I cantos 48 and 49).

230. Ibid. XVI chs. 1 to 3.

231. Ibid. III chs. 205 to 216. It is clear that the Brāhman Kauśika who figures in this upākhyāna is not the famous Ṛṣi Viśvāmitra though both are Kauśikas. The former is evidently one belonging to the Brāhman families which were founded by Viśvāmitra and belongs to a period far removed from the founder-sage and nearer the age of the Mahābhārata composition. The story may even be a later interpolation.

Upaniṣads, was reciting them as he was seated under a tree. A crane from above dropped dirt on him. Wrathful, he looked at the bird which at once fell down dead. Sad, however, he went his way and came to the village for alms. There in a house, the lady was busy washing the utensils and therefore, asked the Brāhman to stay while she would come up and offer alms. Meanwhile the husband came; she, at once, addressed herself to attend upon him, offering the arghya, pādyā etc. This took some time, and when the lady came to give alms to the Brāhman, he severely objected to her inordinate delay in honouring the Brāhman, who is an object of veneration even for Indra. And Brāhmans are like fire; they would reduce to ashes, the entire earth! With these words he looked at her fiercely. But the pativaratā coolly replied—

Nāham balākā viprarṣe tyaja krodham tapodhana /  
 Anayā kruddhayā drṣṭyā kruddhaḥ kim mām kariṣyasi /  
 Nāvajānāmyaham viprān devais tulyān manasvinaḥ /  
 Aparādhām imam vipra kṣantum arhasi me'nagha /

\* \* \*

Patīśuśrūṣayā dharmo yas sa me rocate dvija /  
 Daivateṣvapi sarveṣu bhartā me daivatam param //<sup>232</sup>

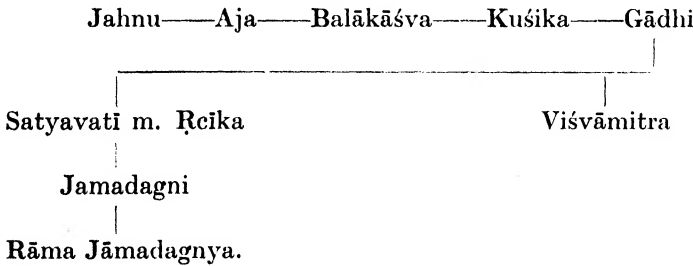
“ I am not the crane. O sage; give up your anger. What indeed would you do for me with your angry looks? Brāhmans I will not disregard, for they are high-minded and equal to the gods. Do forgive this mistake, O sinless one. ...What dharma there is in attending upon the husband I like very much. Of all the gods, the husband alone is pre-eminent for me.” She further advised Kauśika to go to Dharmavyādha (the Righteous Hunter) in Mithilā and learn from him all the dharmas. The Brāhman was much ashamed at this discomfiture, but took the lady's advice in good spirit and went to dharmavyādha. The wisdom that he preached was as follows :

- (a) that it is possible to live a virtuous life even though one's profession is to sell meat,
- (b) that sincere repentance cleanses from sin,
- (c) the marks of virtuous conduct,
- (d) that there is justification for the killing of animals and eating their flesh,
- (e) concerning the law of Karma, the eternity of the soul, re-incarnation and emancipation.
- (f) of Brahma-vidyā—the elements, guṇas, prāṇas, etc. and that the relation of the soul to the senses is like that of a charioteer to his horses,
- (g) of the great merit of dutifulness to parents, and that character is more important than caste.<sup>233</sup>

232. Mbh. III 206.23-24, 30.

233. Mbh. III Chs. 205-216. See G. P. Rice's Index to the Mahābhārata (OUP 1984.)

Describing the exploits of Paraśurāma to Yudhiṣṭhira, Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) traces his lineage<sup>234</sup> to which Viśvāmitra also belongs. Jahnu's son was Aja (Ajamiḍha ?) and his son was Balākāśva. Kuśika was Balākāśva's son. Kuśika performed austerities with the object of gaining a son like Indra. The latter preferred to take upon himself the honour of becoming Kuśika's son. Thus was the famous Gādhi born. Gādhi begot a daughter called Satyavatī who was married to Ṛṣi Ṛcika. This sage prepared the holy caru in order to obtain progeny. As Satyavatī's mother also desired the favour of a son, the sage prepared the sacred food in two parts, prescribing one to his wife and the other to his mother-in-law. But this lady manœuvred to exchange her caru with that of the daughter whereby the progeny would be born with strange attributes. The mother-in-law *i.e.* Gadhi's Queen who was a Kṣatriya woman would bring forth a son full of Brāhmanic splendour and Satyavatī, a ṛṣipatni, would bear a son full of martial strength and glory. On the latter pleading for mercy, it was granted that her grandson would be born with these attributes, while the son would be a Brahmvādin. Thus Viśvāmitra a Kṣatriya with Brāhmanic attainments became the son of Gādhi; Jamadagni was born to Ṛcika, the famous Rāma Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma) was Jamadagni's son who was a Brāhman with Kṣatriya instincts.



234. The same subject is dealt with in a later context, the narrative being ascribed to Bhīṣma (XIII 4). The account is slightly elaborated. (a) The exchange of the carus and the trees (aśvattha and Udumbara) which they had to clasp was due to sophistry on the part of the mother of Satyavatī. There is a slight discrepancy in the genealogy : the family is said to emanate from Bharata, the regular descent being traced from Ajamiḍha downwards *i.e.* Ajamiḍha—Jahnu—Sindhudvīpa—Balākāśva—Kuśika—Gādhi etc. Ajamiḍha is here the father of Jahnu, not son. Jahnu's son is Sindhudvīpa who is not known in the other account. Compare also the Rāmāyṇa version—Rām. I 51.18-19. See supra. (b) A more flagrant departure is indicated in another context *viz.* Mbh. III 115 according to which the person who grants the caru and prescribes the trees is Bhṛgu himself, the father of Ṛcika, this seems to be unnatural and rather unjust to the son who was also a sage of no mean attainments, one who, by Varuṇa's grace, produced, as dowry for the bride whom he loved to marry, a thousand white horses with one of the ears black.

Tatas snuṣām sa bhabavān prahr̥ṣto Bhṛgur abravīt /  
 Varam vṛṇiṣva subhage dātā hyasmi tavepsitam /  
 Sā vai prasādayāmāsa tam gurum putrakāraṇāt /  
 Ātmanaś caiva mātus̥ ca prasādam ca cakāra saḥ /  
 (Sts. 33-34).

(c) Ṛcika's son became son of Viśvāmitra (Viśvāmitrasya putratvam Ṛcikanayo'gamat Mbh. XII 292.13). This legend refers to Śunaśśepa being adopted by Viśvāmitra as his eldest son. According to some Śunaśśepa was Ṛcika's son ; according to others, he was the son of Ajigarta. Śunaśśepa was also said to be a middle son. The anomaly arising out of this varied account has been fully discussed in the previous chapter.

Viśvāmitra was the progenitor of a number of Brāhman families. One of his sons, Aṣṭaka, seems to have continued his Kṣatriya heritage. But his adoption of Śunaśśepa Devarāta as the eldest of all his sons is extolled as one of his glorious achievements. This has been exhaustively dealt with in the previous chapter.

Like the Brāhman Kauśika in the Pativratopākhyāna, we find Viśvāmitra in another humiliating situation. It was a twelve-year famine, when the people had been reduced to nothingness. Famished with hunger and thirst, Viśvāmitra had to forsake his wife and children and wander about for his own sustenance. At last in the outskirts of a village he found the door of a cāṇḍāla's hut open and saw also a quartered dog's leg (śvajāghani) hanging. So taken up with hunger, Viśvāmitra decided to seize the Śvajāghani and eat it. Then follows a conversation between the sage and the cāṇḍāla in which the latter appeals to the former to exercise control in the interest of Dharma, for he was not only trying to eat a forbidden thing but also taking it from a man of the low caste. Viśvāmitra's conviction was only that in time of calamity there is no dharma to count; to save one's life one may transgress the law for the moment. On coming back home, he changed his plan and decided to offer the thing first to the gods and then partake of what remains. As he was about to do this, as if that he had sufficiently tested the sage's will or as if he thought it beneath himself to eat forbidden flesh, Indra sent showers of rain immediately. The scorched earth was quenched; the sage had not got to taste the abhakṣya (anāsvādyā ca taddhaviḥ). So when calamity befalls, the wise man, should extricate himself by all means at his command. One should at all events live; and, alive only one attains merit and prosperity.<sup>235</sup>

Let us now turn to study Vasiṣṭha's greatness as revealed in the Mahābhārata. Vasiṣṭha is Brahman's mind-born son<sup>236</sup> (Brahmaṇo mānasaḥ putraḥ) and husband of Arundhatī and also designated one of the prajāpatis, having a place in the court of Brahma. He is also among those who have become pure souls by virtue (dharmaṇaiva sucetaḥ). "Kāma (desire) and Krodha (anger), who cannot be vanquished even by the immortals, used to shampoo his feet. Though his wrath was excited by Viśvāmitra's offence, he did not yet exterminate the Kuśikas. Afflicted

235. Mbh. XII 141 (Āpaddharmaparva. conduct in time of calamity—

Āhūya devān Indrādīn bhāgam bhāgam vidhikramāt /  
 Etasminneva kāle tu pravavarṣa ca Vāsavaḥ / x x x  
 Sa samhṛtya ca tat karma anāsvādyā ca taddhaviḥ /  
 Toṣayāmāsa devānś ca pitṛnś ca dvijasattamaḥ /  
 Evam vidvan adinātmā vyasanastho jijiviṣuḥ /  
 Sarvopāyair upāyajño dūram ātmānam uddharet /  
 Etām buddhim samāsthāya jīvitavyam sadā bhavet /  
 Jīvan puṇyam avāpnoti puruṣo bhadram aśnute /

(Sts. 90-101).

E. P. Rice thinks that Viśvāmitra "ate cāṇḍāla food and justified the act." This is however contrary to the text. (Rice's Index, p. 54). A famine in which great sages like Viśvāmitra are prostrate should indeed be terrible. The Rgveda records the instance of Vāmadeva (Seer of the Sixth Maṇḍala) who, in similar plight, cooked the entrails of a dog—(Śuna āntrāṇi pece). But Viśvāmitra lived on mere air for a thousand years and never breathed at all for a thousand years more! Which of the reports could be true is a thing to wonder.

236. Cf. Mbh. I 174.5, II 11.18-19, III 81.12, VII 6.6, XII 166.15-16, 208.32, 334.36, 340.69.

at the loss of his sons, he did not do any dreadful deed for the destruction of Viśvā-mitra. He did not transgress Kṛtānta (Death) in order to bring back his lost children from the abode of Yama. It was by obtaining him that the Ikṣvākus acquired this earth and with him as their purohita, they performed many great sacrifices."<sup>237</sup> Vasiṣṭha distinguished himself as purohita of other kings also. To king Samvarāṇa he did a favour by prevailing upon Sūrya to give his daughter Tapatī in marriage.<sup>238</sup> As purohita to Mucukunda, who conquered the earth and ruled by might only, he did penance and killed all the demon hosts let loose by Kubera.<sup>239</sup> At another time he was pleased with Rantideva and when there was terrible draught in the country, he sustained the people like the very lord of Creatures.<sup>240</sup> With the co-operation of sage Vāmadeva, he accompanied Bharata to the forest to bring Rāma back and later, anointed Rāma Dāśarathi on the throne<sup>241</sup> and also worshipped Kṛṣṇa while he was on his mission to Duryodhana,<sup>242</sup> performed a sacrifice for Kuru in Kurukṣetra on the River Sarasvatī.<sup>243</sup> Vasiṣṭha is further reputed to be the propagator of one of four original gotras.<sup>244</sup> He caused the Sarayū river to flow on earth.<sup>245</sup> Sage Parāśara was his grandson<sup>246</sup> and the great Vyāsa was the son of Parāśara.<sup>247</sup> In heaven Vasiṣṭha did yeoman service to Indra, fighting with the demon Vṛtra; Indra became unconscious once; at that time did Vasiṣṭha revive him with the Rathantara-Sāma.<sup>248</sup>

Apart from his being Brahma's mind-born son, Vasiṣṭha is said to have arisen from the seed of the gods which Kṛṣṇa caused to fall into a jar; so Bhīṣma explains while expatiating on the greatness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.<sup>249</sup> The birth of the sage took place in the Eastern direction, there he became famous and there did he depart

237. Ibid. I 174.5-11.

238. Ibid. I 94.42-45, 173.26.

239. XII 74.6-7.

240. XII 284.17, XIII 137.6.

241. III 277.37, 201.66.

242. V 83.27.

243. IX 38.27.

244. XII 296.17.

Mūlagotrāṇi catvāri samutpannāni pārthiva /  
 Āngirāḥ Kaśyapaś caiva Vaśiṣṭho Bhrgur eva ca //

245. XIII 155.21.

246. I 178.3 Son of Śakti by Adṛśyanti XII 349.0.

247. XIII 24.3.

248. XII 281.21.

249. Mbh. XIII 158.19—

Tasyāntarikṣam prthivi divam ca /  
 Sarvam vaśe tiṣṭhati śāśvatasya /  
 Sa kumbhe retas sasṛje surāṇām /  
 Yatrotpannam ṛṣim āhur Vasiṣṭham //

Kṛṣṇa, here, is to be understood, of course, in the sense of the All-powerful God, whose incarnation Kṛṣṇa was believed to be,

this world.<sup>250</sup> Vasiṣṭha was highly regarded as the best of Brāhmaṇas (viprāṇām śreṣṭhaḥ),<sup>251</sup> so much so that Indra once went in the guise of Vasiṣṭha to test the will of Śrūtāvati daughter of Bharadvāja.<sup>252</sup> Śrūtāvati was doing penance with the object of marrying Indra only. When the guest (Indra disguised as Vasiṣṭha) arrived, she welcomed him according to the rules laid down and humbly offered any service except her hand which was to clasp Indra's only.<sup>253</sup> The revered guest then gave five jujube fruits (badara), asking her to prepare a meal out of them and went away. When she set herself to the task, they would not bake at all. The fuel was exhausted, but she put her legs into the hearth as fuel, without a tremor and without a sigh. The God was pleased and took her to heaven. That holy spot is called Badarapācana.<sup>254</sup>

Vasiṣṭha and Arundhati are objects of adoration and example to society. Kuntī blesses Draupadī that she may be to her husbands as Arundhati to Vasiṣṭha, as Bhadrā to Vaiśravaṇa and as Lakṣmī to Nārāyaṇa etc.<sup>255</sup> Śāntā, daughter of Lomapāda, attended upon Ṛṣyaśṛṅga as devotedly as Arundhati upon Vasiṣṭha,<sup>256</sup> as Lopāmudrā upon Agastya etc. When the world is beset with calamity the revered dame Arundhati supersedes Vasiṣṭha!<sup>257</sup> But Arundhati's virtue is unimpeachable as is evidenced by the story of Agni's love for the wives of the Seven Sages. Svāhā, in winning the love of Agni, could not impersonate Arundhati, because of her spotless character as a pativrātā, while she successfully impersonated the other six and bore the great War-god, Kumāra.<sup>258</sup> Finally Bhīṣma relates how Arundhati preached righteousness (dharma) to the Sages, the manes and the gods,<sup>259</sup> concentrating upon the efficacy of gifts and of the worship of the cow. Brahmā extolled her for such salutary counsel and wished greater and greater

250. Ibid. V 108.13. Atra pūrvam Vasiṣṭhasya paurāṇasya dvijaṣabha / Sūtiś caiva pratiṣṭhā ca nidhanam ca prakāśate // Vasiṣṭha's demise came about in the form of giving up the mortal body on account of Nimi's curse: see com. Context—Supraṇa describing the importance of each of the four quarters to Gālava.

251. Ibid. VII 6.6., XII 122.31 etc.

252. Ibid., IX 48.

253. "Śakrabhaktyā ca te pāṇim na dāsyāmi kathaṇcana" / Ibid. IX 48.9.

254. "Idam ca te tīrthavaram sthiram loke bhaviṣyati / Sarvapāpāpaham subhru nāmnā Badarapācanam // Ibid. st. 32.

255. "Yathā Vaiśravaṇe Bhadrā Vasiṣṭhe cāpyarundhati / Yathā Nārāyaṇe Lakṣmīś tathā tvam bhava bhartṛṣu // Mbh. I 199.6.

256. III 118.23 "Arundhatīva subhagā Vasiṣṭham Lopāmudrā vā yathā hyagastyam!" Cf. also V 117.17—Divodāsa sported with Mādhavī as Adṛśyanti with Vasiṣṭha, and Akṣamālā with Vasiṣṭha (Vasiṣṭhaś cākṣamālayā)—Gālavacarita.

257. "Yā caisā viśrutā rājāṃś trailokye sādhusammatā / Arundhati tayāpyeṣa Vasiṣṭhaḥ prsthataḥ kṛtaḥ // VI 2.31. This of course refers to the stellar movements; the one referred to here is an ill omen foreboding calamity, as observed by Bhīṣma before Dhṛtarāṣṭra on the eve of the Great War. Figuratively too, it is meant to suggest an upheaval in society when such a dutiful wife should disregard a saintly husband.

258. Mbh. III 226.

259. XIII 130.1-12 et seq.

glory for her austerities. On several occasions Vasiṣṭha himself is engaged in philosophic discussions with Brahmā on the one side<sup>260</sup> and with Karālanaka on the other; taught higher knowledge to Nārada.<sup>261</sup> Hiranyakṣipu was cursed by Vasiṣṭha son of Hiranyagabha because he elected a different Hotṛ priest, whereby he even before the sacrifice ended, met his own end at the hands of a very strange being.<sup>262</sup>

Having thus surveyed the individual life story of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra as depicted in the Mahābhārata, we may now examine the story of their age-long hostility. The Mbh. tradition, of course, takes the rivalry or even hatred between the sages as an established fact. But as they have been counted within the group of the most eminent sages, the Saptarṣis, it is also undeniable that the question of their hatred had long before been shelved. It no doubt endured in popular tradition only to do credit to both sages, the one as an embodiment of saintly excellence, the other an embodiment of the highest realisation through action (*puruṣakāra*). The one was born divine and the other, by *tapas*, attained divinity. We may now recapitulate their mutual hostility as related in the Mbh.

The Gandharva relates the story to Arjuna.<sup>263</sup> This old story (*purāṇa*) of Vasiṣṭha they tell in all worlds. In Kānyakubja, king Gādhi, son of Kuśika, had a son Viśvāmitra, who, with his ministers used to go a-hunting. Once he arrived at the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha, who offered him *arghya* etc. from his cow Nandinī, who yielded everything desired; Viśvāmitra asked Vasiṣṭha to give him Nandinī for an *arbuda* of kine or his kingdom but in vain. Then he wanted to take the cow by force. She repaired to Vasiṣṭha, who at first did nothing saying<sup>264</sup> "I am a forgiving brāhman," but at last he said, "I do not abandon you! Stay if you can!"<sup>265</sup> Hearing this word, the cow attacked Viśvāmitra's troops. From her tail she began to rain showers of burning coals, from her tail she brought forth Pahlavas, from her udders Drāviḍas and Śakas, from her vitals Yavanas, from her dung Śabaras, from her urine and from her sides several other Śabaras, and from the froth of her mouth Paundras, Kirātas, Yavanas, Simhalas, Barbaras, Khasas, Cibukas, Pulindas, Cīṇas, Hūṇas, Keralas and other Mlecchas, who attacked Viśvāmitra's soldiers. Viśvāmitra's troops fled, but none was deprived of life. Viśvāmitra then, disgusted with Kṣatriya prowess,<sup>266</sup> set his mind on asceticism and finally became a brahman and drank soma with Indra.

260. XIII 6.

261. XII 302-309 chs.

262. Mbh. XII 342.31 (Nārāyaṇīya), the strange Being being the Man-Lion incarnation of God Nārāyaṇa.

263. Ibid I 175.

264. Kṣatriyāṇām balaṃ tejo brāhmaṇānām kṣamā balaṃ / St. 29.

265. Na tvām tyajāmi kalyāṇi sthiyatām yadi śakyate / St. 31.

266. "Dhig balaṃ Kṣatriya-balaṃ brahmatejobalaṃ balaṃ" St. 45.



Viśvāmitra's hatred is said to have manifested itself in another incident which appears to have some Vedic authority.<sup>267</sup> King Kalmāṣapāda Saudāsa of the Ikṣvāku race was cursed by Vasiṣṭha's son Śakti to become a cannibal and, unfortunately Śakti himself became the first victim. Viśvāmitra was an accomplice<sup>268</sup> in this dastardly act inasmuch as he directed a fiend called Kiṅkara to possess king Kalmāṣapāda. That gave him the required monstrosity to eat human beings. Vasiṣṭha was filled with sorrow at this bereavement; but he patiently bore his grief and resolved rather to sacrifice his own life than exterminate the Kuśikas. He threw himself down from the summit of Meru, entered a huge fire in the forest, and tied a heavy weight to his neck and threw himself into the sea, but all in vain, and, in distress of heart, he returned to his hermitage. Beholding it bereft of his children, he left it again and tied himself strongly with cords and flung himself into a mighty river, but the stream cut those cords and cast the ṛṣi ashore whence that river was called Vipāśā. Once more he threw himself into a river flowing from Himavat (Haimavati) but the river immediately fled in 100 different directions and has since been known by the name of Śatadru.<sup>269</sup> He now again went towards his hermitage,<sup>270</sup> and was, on the way, addressed by Adṛśyanti, the wife of Śakti, who had for twelve years borne his child in her womb. Hearing that child in the womb reciting the Vedas with the six aṅgas, Vasiṣṭha refrained from self-destruction<sup>271</sup> and, accompanied by Adṛśyanti returned to his hermitage. One day he saw Kalmāṣapāda, who would devour him. Adṛśyanti was terrified, but Vasiṣṭha restrained him by uttering "hum," and, sprinkling him with water sanctified by mantras, freed him from his curse that had lasted twelve years. Kalmāṣapāda promised never more to insult Brāhmins and prevailed upon Vasiṣṭha that he accompanied him to his capital Ayodhyā and begot a son for him on the queen. Then he went back to his hermitage. After twelve years the queen tore open her womb by a stone, and then was born the Rājaraṣi Aśmaka, who founded the city of Paudanya.<sup>272</sup>

Arjuna asked : why did Kalmāṣapāda command his queen to go to Vasiṣṭha? And was this an act of sin on Vasiṣṭha's part? The Gandharva replied :<sup>273</sup> Under the influence of the curse, Kalmāṣapāda, in anger, went out of his capital, accompanied by his wife. In a solitary part of the woods he saw a Brāhman and his wife embracing each other. The couple ran away, but Kalmāṣapāda forcibly

267. The Vedic version is that Śakti was thrown into fire by the Saudāsas. *Vide* BD VI 28,34, also Sarvā (p. 25) on RV VII 82.

268. "Viśvāmitras tato rakṣa ādideśa nṛpam prati /  
Śāpāt tasya tu viprarṣer Viśvāmitrasya cājñayā /  
Rākṣasaḥ Kiṅkaro nāma viveśa nṛpatim tadā // "

Mbh. I 176.20-21.

269. "Śatadhā vidrutā yasmāc chatadrur iti viśrutā " Ib. I 177.9.

270. "Martum na śakyam ityuktā punarevāśramam yayau " / St. 10.

271. 'Evam uktas tayā hr̥ṣṭo Vasiṣṭhaḥ śreṣṭhabhāg ṛṣiḥ /  
Asti santānam ityuktā mṛtyoḥ pārtha nyavartata // St. 16.

272. Mbh. I 177.

273. Ibid. I 182.

seized the Brāhmaṇ. The Brāhmaṇī asked him to liberate her husband, but he cruelly devoured him. The tears that the woman shed blazed up like fire and consumed everything in that place. The Brāhmaṇī cursed the rājaraṣi saying that he should meet with instant death when cohabiting with his wife and that his wife should have a son from Vasiṣṭha whose children he had devoured, and that child should be the propagator of his race. Then she entered the fire. Vasiṣṭha by his ascetic power immediately knew all about it. And long after this, when the Rājaraṣi became freed from his curse, he approached his wife Madayanti, not remembering the curse of the Brāhmaṇī. Hearing, however, the words of his wife, he recollected the curse and therefore, he appointed Vasiṣṭha to beget a son on his queen.

Viśvāmitra's first encounter with Vasiṣṭha is somewhat differently related in another context. While describing Balarāma's pilgrimage in Śalya-parva, Vaiśampāyana relates to Janamejaya the story of how certain kings attained Brāhmaṇhood, and among them Viśvāmitra.<sup>274</sup> The great Kṣatriya Gādhī Kauśika became an ascetic, having resolved to give up his body, he installed his son Viśvāmitra on the throne, notwithstanding the solicitations of his subjects, and went to heaven. Viśvāmitra however could not protect the earth even with his best exertions.<sup>275</sup> He then heard of a great fear of the Rākṣasas, and went out with his army. In the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha, his troops caused much mischief; when Vasiṣṭha came to the hermitage he became angry and commanded his cow to create many terrible Śabaras, who, encountering the army of Viśvāmitra caused great carnage and the troops fled away. Viśvāmitra then set his heart on ascetic austerities, and in the tirtha of the Sarasvatī, he began to emaciate his own body,<sup>276</sup> although the gods repeatedly attempted to interrupt him. Brahmā granted him the boon that he should become a brāhmaṇ. Then he wandered over the whole earth like a celestial.<sup>277</sup>

Viśvāmitra's hatred of Vasiṣṭha appears to have been of an uncompromising and unrelenting kind as the former wished to kill the latter by any means.<sup>278</sup> The hermitage of Vasiṣṭha was in Sthāṇutirtha on the bank of the Sarasvatī; on the opposite bank was the hermitage of Viśvāmitra. There Sthāṇu had practised penances, and having performed a sacrifice and worshipped the Sarasvatī, he had established a tirtha and there the gods of yore installed Skanda. Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha everyday challenged each other in respect of the superiority of their penances. Viśvāmitra ordered the Sarasvatī, notwithstanding her trembling, to bring Vasiṣṭha into his presence, that he might slay him. Vasiṣṭha willingly let

274. IX 40.11-29.

275. "Na sa śaknoti pṛthivīm yatnavān api rakṣitum" / St.17.

276. "Jalāhāro vāyubhakṣaḥ parṇāhāraś ca so'bhavat /  
Tathā sthaṇḍilāśāyī ca ye cānye niyamāḥ pṛthak /  
Asakṛt tasya devās tu vratavigñnam pracakṛe" / Sts. 24-5.

277. "Sa labdhvā tapasogreṇa brāhmaṇatvam mahāyaśāḥ /  
Vicacāra mahīm kṛtsnām kṛtakāmas suropamaḥ" / St.29.

278. Mbh. IX 42 and 43 (chs.).

her do so, lest Viśvāmitra should curse her. Sartasvatī washed away one of her banks and bore Vasiṣṭha away and informed Viśvāmitra about his arrival; but while the latter was looking for a weapon she quickly washed Vasiṣṭha back to the Eastern bank. Viśvāmitra cursed her, saying that her current should be changed into blood which is acceptable only to the Rākṣasas. For a whole year she then flowed bearing blood mixed with water. The gods, the Gandharvas, and the Apsarasas grieved. For this reason the tīrtha came to be Vasiṣṭhāpavāha.

Sarasvatī, however, once more got back her own proper condition when some sages on a pilgrimage to the holy river, having bathed in all her tīrthas, came to Vasiṣṭhāpavāha, and saw the water mixed with blood, innumerable Rākṣasas drinking it. Having learnt the cause, they worshipped Mahādeva with penances and purified the Sarasvatī.<sup>279</sup> The Rākṣasas, who were Brahma-Rākṣasas (so those among Vaiśyas, Śūdras and Kṣatriyas who hate and injure the brāhmanas, become Rākṣasas), afflicted with hunger, sought the protection of the sages who, having ordained what should be the food of the Rākṣasas, solicited the Sarasvatī, who assumed a new shape called Aruṇā (Red River); bathing in that new river, the Rākṣasas abandoned their bodies and went to heaven. Ascertaining all this, Indra bathed there and became purified of a grievous sin (Brahmahatyā).<sup>280</sup>

Before taking a retrospect of the history of the two sages and their mutual relationship, we may take note of a partial summary of Viśvāmitra's deeds, given in connection with the Śakuntalopākhyāna. Śakuntalā relates her parentage to Duśyanta as once given out by sage Kaṇva to another sage who came as a guest. Viśvāmitra deprived Vasiṣṭha of his children. Though born as a Kṣatriya he became a brahman through his penances, and created the river Kauśikī for his ablutions. There his wife, during a famine, was maintained by the rājarṣi Mataṅga who was living as a hunter. Therefore when the famine was over, Viśvāmitra changed the name of the river into Pārā and performed a sacrifice for Mataṅga and Indra himself, from fear, came there to drink soma. Viśvāmitra in anger, created another world and a series of nakṣatras, beginning with Pratiśravaṇa and gave protection to Triśaṅku, who was cursed by his preceptor. He could burn the three worlds by his splendour, and by a kick cause the earth to shake. He could sever Meru and hurl it away at any distance. He could round the Earth, in a moment and Yama, Soma, the Maharṣis, the Sādhyas, the Viśvas and the Vālakhilyas are afraid of his prowess.<sup>281</sup>

279. Te sarve brāhmanā rājāṁś tapobhir niyamais tathā /  
Upavāsaiś ca vividhair yamair kaṣṭhavratāis tathā /  
Ārādhy paśu-bhartāram mahādevam jagatpatim /  
Mokṣayāmāsus tām devīm saricchreṣṭhām Sarasvatīm /  
(IX 43.14-15).

280. Arising out of the slaying of Namuci. Ibid. Sts. 33-45.

281. Mbh. I 71.29-39. The confusion in the sequence of events in this narrative is undoubted, Apsaras Menakā is pleading before Indra as to how, forsooth, could she tackle a sage of such prowess and anger. Elsewhere (in the Rām. for instance) it is represented that the Menakā episode was a stage in the sage's elevation to Brāhmanhood; possibly so, because the Bramharṣi is free from excitement, anger and passion: and Menakā provided a test. Secondly, are Mataṅga and Triśaṅku different or identical? The tenor of this passage points to their being different

From the numerous references to Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra in the Great Epics, Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, it is reasonable to deduce as follows :

(a) Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra had a long life of activity before they were elevated to be among the chosen Seven *i.e.* the Saptarṣis.

(b) Vasiṣṭha was born great, all saintliness and virtue were natural to him, he was the embodiment of patience, of the quality of Sattva. His passive resistance when attacked by the enemy appears exemplary. His attempt at self-immolation in his bereavement is somewhat strange and savours of being too commonplace. His eminence, however, as saint and priest of kings (purohita) is undoubted.

(c) Viśvāmitra achieved greatness. Son of a king, he perfected himself in the qualities and attainments of a rājanya ; an embodiment of the quality of Rajas, he was. But seeing that the quality of Sattva had more enduring features, determined to acquire it. The chief thing was to conquer passion and anger ; this he did achieve by penance, by patient but steadfast endeavour (puruṣakāra).

(d) The Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra feud reveals itself as a thing of the ancient past even in the age of the Mbh. Tradition, at any rate, believed that the two sages were once upon a time enemies of each other. The events connected therewith were remembered not because it was a quarrel between two great personalities but because it would serve as a beacon light of righteousness on the one hand and effective human endeavour on the other.

(e) Popular tradition betrays no partiality to either of them, one, for instance, of the nature suggested by the expression “ Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ,” which is applied to a few verses in the Viśvāmitra-maṇḍala, said to be imprecations against the Vasiṣṭhas ; whereas no imprecation in the Vasiṣṭha-maṇḍala is ever regarded as despising the Viśvāmitras. The Mbh. age conceives the sages as equally respectable ; there was no question of their relative superiority. On the other hand, a word should be said to the credit of the self-made saint Viśvāmitra, who, by dint of his achievement, had inspired the people with a reverential awe. The world was amazed at his powers of making or unmaking it. It was not much wonder that he could as well be one of the four founders of Brāhman tribes as it were and hence an inspirer of a tradition by itself ; a veritable sampradāya-pravartaka.

#### HARIVAMŚA

One incident connected with Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra is pointedly dealt with in the Harivamśa, that is about Satyavrata.<sup>282</sup> He was the son of king Trayyāruṇa

persons, though they are possibly identical with one another, as is stated in another context. (*Vide* VP Wilson vol. III pp. 284 ff. as referred to in his MOST I. p. 375 f. See VP text IV 3.13, compare also Hari. 12 and 18, where Vasiṣṭha is also introduced). The anomalies in the narrative of Viśvāmitra's deeds, as shown above, may be of no serious consequence when we remember that the narrator was Śakuntalā, who in her unsophisticated innocence recalled the events of a bygone age just as they occurred to her mind. They have no chronological value.

who had Vasiṣṭha for his priest. Once Satyavrata carried away a bride who had been betrothed to another. King Trayyāruṇa abandoned the son on this account whereupon the latter lived among the low caste people in a degraded condition. The old king went to the forest, for penance. Vasiṣṭha himself managed the affairs of State. A twelve year draught then set in as result of *adharma* for which Satyavrata was responsible. The latter, however, nourished a sense of anger against Vasiṣṭha because he did not exert his influence to dissuade the king from the drastic punishment which was inflicted on the Prince. At this time, Viśvāmitra had left his family and children there and gone to the shores of the ocean for penance. When the famine set in, the family was reduced to severe straits. Viśvāmitra's wife was about to sell away her middle son (Gālava) for a hundred cows in order to sustain the rest. Meanwhile Satyavrata intervened and liberated the boy, and, until Viśvāmitra returned from penance, provided them with venison and pork which he (every day) tied to a tree near their residence. To Vasiṣṭha, however, he never reconciled himself; and once when he could not procure food anywhere, he happened to see Vasiṣṭha's all-bestowing cow which he at once killed and fed himself and Viśvāmitra's family. Vasiṣṭha got angry and denounced the offender as Triśaṅku, one who has committed three sins, *viz.* causing displeasure to the father, killing the preceptor's cow and eating unsprinkled food.<sup>283</sup> Now Viśvāmitra returned from austerities and was much pleased with Satyavrata for the support he gave for his family in his absence. Asked to elect a favour in return, the outcast Prince prayed that he might be enabled to ascend Heaven bodily. The famine having abated, Viśvāmitra reinstated him on the throne and sacrificed for him so that, as all gods and even Vasiṣṭha could see, sent Triśaṅku bodily to Heaven. The famous Hariścandra was the son of this King Satyavarta Triśaṅku.<sup>284</sup>

Viśvāmitra's lineage, the adoption of Śunaśśepa Devarāta into his family with all rights of primogeniture, and the ever-baffling host of sons and families that emanated from him have been accounted in the *Harivaṁśa*.<sup>285</sup> These have been fully discussed in the foregoing chapters in various contexts. So far as genealogies go, the accounts in the *Hari.* add to the confusion. Śunaśśepa is the middle son with Jamadagni for his elder brother and Śunaḥpuccha for the younger!<sup>286</sup> Viśvāmitra's original name was Viśvaratha,<sup>287</sup> not the only son of Gādhi, he had brothers as well, Viśvakṛt, and Viśvajit, and a sister Satyavati,

283. *aprokṣitopayogāt asamskṛtamāmsabhakṣaṇāt* Ib. XIII 18.

284. *Hari.* XIII 18-19.

Pitūś cāparitoṣeṇa guror dogdhrivadhena ca /  
Aprokṣitopayogāc ca trividhas te vyatikramah /  
Evam trīṇyasya śaṅkūni tāni dṛṣṭvā mahātapaḥ /  
Triśaṅkur iti hovāca Triśaṅkur iti sa smṛtaḥ //

285. *Ibid.* XXVII

286. *Ibid.* *Sts.* 41-42.

287. Viśvāmitras tu dharmātmā nāmnā Viśvarathas smṛtaḥ /  
Jajñe Bhṛguprasādena Kauśikād Vamśavardhanaḥ // *St.* 44.

ungest of them all.<sup>288</sup> One is tempted to think that all the three names śvaratha, Viśvakṛt and Viśvajit are only epithets<sup>289</sup> of Viśvāmitra who possessed all the qualities connoted by those names: the course of his chariot tended over all the three worlds; he was world-maker (anyam Indram kariṣyāmi c.) and world-conqueror.

## VII

### PURĀṆAS

Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are familiar personalities in the entire range of irāṇic literature. Both sages were revered. Vasiṣṭha was regarded as one of the mind-born sons of Brahmā.<sup>290</sup> He and Viśvāmitra are both counted among the seven holy sages (Saptarṣis) of the Vaivasvata-manvantara.<sup>291</sup> Between them, they have rendered so many places on the banks of the Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā holy account of one or other of their great achievements. Quite new incidents have been recorded about them, as we shall see presently. Their rivalry or hostility is a thing of the past, not endangering the reputation of either, of course. Nevertheless the several incidents which mark their mutual jealousy and hatred are narrated with ever-changing colours.

While Vasiṣṭha was described as a mind-born son of the Creator, we see a second birth become necessary for him on account of the curse of Nimi! The story thus told in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa: The son of Ikṣvāku, who was named Nimi, instituted a sacrifice that was to endure for a thousand years, and applied to Vasiṣṭha to offer the oblations. Vasiṣṭha in answer said that he had been

288. Viśvāmitras tu Gādheyo rājā Viśvarathas tadā /  
Viśvakṛd Viśvajiccaiva tathā Satyavatiṃ nṛpa / Ib. XXXII 51-3.  
—Satyavati Viśvāmitrādīnām Kaniyāsī (com.)

289. Pargiter thinks that Viśvaratha was his original name. That is how it looks from CVII 44. But seeing that coupled with two more names in XXXII 51-52, it is better to conceive them as epithets. The name Viśvāmitra itself appears to be an acquired name. His real name appears to be unknown.

290. See, for instance, Brahma I 43.4, Viṣṇu I 7.5, Brahmāṇḍa II 11, Matsya 3.6-7, āgavata III 12.22-24, Vāyu 25.82, etc. The number of these mānasa-putras ranges from 6 to 10. Vasiṣṭha married Ūrijā (Energy), one of the 24 daughters of Patriarch Dakṣa, and had seven sons by her, namely, Rajas, Gātra, Ūrdhva-bāhu, Savana, Anagha, Sutapas and Śukra. Viṣṇu I 10.13 f). The famous Śakti and other sons are from a different marriage evidently—śamālā or Arundhati.

291. The Seven Sages are supposed to be different in each Manvantara. For instance in the third i.e. Auttami Manvantara. (Vide Viṣṇu III 1.15) the seven sons of Vasiṣṭha were the seven Ṛṣis. Strange, however, that the father is one of the seven sages only in a later i.e. the seventh Manvantara (Vaivasvata). It must be a descendant of the progenitor of the Vasiṣṭha family. Incidentally, it may be noted, that the entire cosmogony changes from Manvantara to Manvantara. Different is Indra, different are the classes of gods, the divine sages etc. This circular picture is ably satirised by Nilakaṇṭha Dikṣita in his Campū, the Nilakaṇṭha-Vijaya. In the outer chamber of Brahma's Palace, a number of Potentates are waiting for an interview with the Highest one. Indra went up to the door, the Lord-in-Waiting asks: "Indra of what are you?" (Katamaḥ Purandaraḥ)! The accounts in the Purāṇas and the Upapurāṇas pertaining to the creation are by no means consistent. They baffle all attempts at a clear delineation. One may however benefit from a perusal of the notes provided by H. H. Wilson in his edition of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa Books I to III.

pre-engaged by Indra for five hundred years, but if the king would wait for some time, he would come and officiate as superintending priest. The king made no answer, and Vasiṣṭha went away supposing that he had assented. When the sage had completed the performance of the ceremonies he had conducted for Indra, he returned with all speed to Nimi, purposing to render him the like office. When he arrived, however, and found that Nimi had retained Gautama and other priests to minister at his sacrifice, he was much displeased and pronounced upon the king, who was then asleep, a curse to the effect that since he had not intimated his intention, but transferred to Gautama the duty he had first entrusted to himself, Vasiṣṭha, Nimi should thenceforth cease to exist in corporeal form. When Nimi woke up and knew what had happened, he in return denounced as an imprecation upon his unjust preceptor, that he also should lose his bodily existence as punishment for uttering a curse upon him before communicating with him. Nimi then abandoned his bodily condition. The spirit of Vasiṣṭha also leaving his body was united with the spirits of Mitra and Varuṇa for a season until, through their passion for the celestial nymph Urvaśī the sage was reborn. The corpse of Nimi was preserved from decay by being embalmed with fragrant oils and resins. When the sacrifice was concluded, the gods who had come to receive their portions were willing to restore him to bodily life, but Nimi declined to resume a corporeal shape. He wished, however, to dwell in the eyes of all beings. To this desire, the gods assented and Nimi was placed by them in the eyes of all living creatures, in consequence of which their eyelids are ever opening and closing.<sup>292</sup>

Vasiṣṭha was responsible for the banishment of Vikukṣi by his father Ikṣvāku. Upon one of the days called Aṣṭakā, Ikṣvāku being desirous of celebrating ancestral obsequies, ordered Vikukṣi, to bring him flesh suitable for the offering. The prince accordingly went into the forest and killed many deer, and other wild animals for the ceremony. Being weary with the chase and being hungry, he sat down and ate a hare; after which, being refreshed, he carried the rest of the game to his father. Vasiṣṭha the family priest of the House of Ikṣvāku was summoned to consecrate the food, but he declared that it was impure, in consequence of Vikukṣi having eaten a hare from amongst it (making it thus, as it were, the remnant of his meal). Vikukṣi was in consequence abandoned by his offended father and the epithet Śaśāda (hare-eater) was given to him being so described by the preceptor.<sup>293</sup>

Turning to Viśvāmitra, we find that his descent is traced to Jahnu, who in turn was descended from Amāvasu son of Aila. Viśvāmitra is the son of Gādhi and grandson of Kuśika according to Brahma-purāṇa, of Kuśāmba according to

292. Viṣṇu IV 1-9 (sections in prose style). *Vide also*: Matsya 61.32-6, 201.1-17, Padma V 22.34.-37, Vāyu 89.4; Brahmāṇḍa III 64.4, Bhāgavata IX 18.1-6, Rām. VII 55.56,57. According to Pargiter, there were two kings of the name, one of Videha and another of Vidarbha; Nimi is also a ṛṣi belonging to the Ātreyas. Nimi of the episode in question must be of Videha (Vi-deha = bodiless) as the name itself suggests. (AIHT: consult the Index). Slight variations may be perceived in the different Purāṇas cited above. *cf.* AIHT p. 215.

293. Viṣṇu IV 2.5-7, *cf.* also Vāyu 68.11-19, Brahma 7.48-51, Brahmāṇḍa III 68.11-20.

**Viṣṇu-Purāṇa.**<sup>294</sup> These are minor differences ; one thing is certain, Viśvāmitra, at all events, was born in a line of kings but became a Brahmarṣi by resolve. His association with the Śunaśśepa legend, as told in the Purāṇas, has been fully discussed in the previous chapter.

The incident of having to eat dog's flesh for want of better food during a twelve-year famine was the occasion for a discourse between Viśvāmitra and a Cāṇḍāla from whose house, the sage was about to make away with "dog's leg" (śva-jāghani), on the right or wrong of such an action. Ultimately Indra opened his eyes and showered rain to end the famine. The Brahma purāṇa describes this story more picturesquely.<sup>295</sup> Once there occurred a terrible draught, there was nowhere food available. Viśvāmitra repaired to the holy river Gautamī. Seeing his wife, children and disciples emaciated with hunger, the sage ordered the pupils to hunt up something to eat without delay. They roamed about and brought a dead dog which was all they could find. Viśvāmitra said : "Very well, cut it up, wash and roast it ; we shall, according to rule, propitiate the gods, sages, and the manes and then partake of the remainder." The pupils obeyed. Agni came, the gods' messenger, was astonished to see the offering and told the gods that they have to eat dog's flesh which the sage in distress has offered. To prevent such a base offering, Indra came as an eagle and carried away the vessel which contained the flesh. The sage was wrath when the pupils reported this and was about to curse when Indra transformed the contents into honey and replaced the vessel. But Viśvāmitra demanded the dog's flesh itself on pain of being reduced to ashes. Afraid of consequences, Indra came up and said, "why bother about the inedible dog's flesh, pour the honey-oblation and drink the rest in the company of your children." Viśvāmitra replied, 'what use with one such meal ? All people are suffering, then what is the good of this honey ? If it should become nectar for all, then only I would have it pure, otherwise, gods and manes shall eat this flesh of the dog. And then I shall also eat it, to be sure.'<sup>296</sup> Realising the danger, Indra immediately summoned the clouds and showered nectar-like rain on earth. There was joy everywhere. Thenceforth that place on the Gautami became famous as Viśvāmitra-tīrtha.

294. Brahma 10.11-68, Viṣṇu IV 7.1-16, Vāyu 91.49-103, reads Kuśāśva for Kuśika, Brahmanḍa III 66.28-69.

295. Brahma 93.4-24. cf. Mbh. XII 141. supra p.

296. Viśvāmitro'pi netyāha bhuktenaikena kim phalam /  
Prajās sarvās ca sīdanti kim tena madhunā hare /  
Sarveśām amṛtam cetsyāt bhokṣye'ham amṛtam śuci /  
Athavā devapitaro bhokṣyantidam śvamāmsakam /  
Paścād aham tacca māmsam bhokṣye nāṃṛtam asti me /  
Tato bhītas Sahasrākṣo meghānāhūya tatkaṣaṇāt /  
Vavarṣa cāmṛtam vāri hyamṛtenārpitāḥ prajāḥ //

Ibid. sts. 20-23.

There is no doubt that the outline of the story given in the Mbh. is here expanded and embellished so as to make it attractive to those for whom the literature was meant. That these sages with all their divine powers had to suffer earthly ills as hunger and thirst is hard to reconcile.



Now remain the legend of Kalmāṣapāda and that of Satyavrata Trisanku, both of which remind the world of the ancient feud between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvā-mitra. The Viṣṇu-purāṇa narrates the first story as follows : Mitrasaha, son of Sudāsa of Ayodhyā once celebrated a sacrifice which was conducted by Vasiṣṭha. At the close of the rite, Vasiṣṭha went out. At that time a Rākṣasa assumed the semblance of Vasiṣṭha and came and said to the king : “ Now that the sacrifice is ended, you must give me flesh to eat ; let it be cooked and I, will presently return.” Having said this, he withdrew, and, transforming himself into the shape of the cook, dressed some human flesh, which he brought to the king, who, receiving it on a plate of gold, awaited the reappearance of Vasiṣṭha. As soon as the sage returned, the king offered him the dish. Vasiṣṭha, surprised at such want of propriety in the king, as his offering him meat to eat, considered what it should be that was so presented and by the efficacy of his meditations discovered that it was human flesh. He grew angry and denounced a curse upon the king saying : ‘ Inasmuch as you have insulted all such holy men as we are, by giving me what is not to be eaten, your appetite shall henceforth be excited by similar food.

“ It was yourself,” replied the king to the indignant sage, “ who commanded his food to be prepared.” “ By me !” exclaimed Vasiṣṭha, “ how could that have been ?” and, again, having recourse to meditation, he detected the whole ruth. Foregoing then all displeasure towards the king, he said : “ The food to which I have sentenced you shall not be your sustenance for ever, it shall only be so for twelve years.” The king who had taken up water in the palm of his hand and was prepared to curse the sage, now considered that Vasiṣṭha was his spiritual guide, and being reminded by Madayanti his queen that it ill became him to denounce an imprecation upon a holy teacher, who was the guardian divinity of his race, abandoned his intention. Unwilling to cast the water upon the earth, lest it should wither up the grain, for it was impregnated with his malediction, and equally reluctant to throw it up into the air lest it should blast the clouds and dry up their contents, he threw it down upon his own feet. Scalded by the heat which the water had derived from his angry imprecation, the feet of the king became potted black and white, and he thence obtained the name of Kalmāṣapāda or he with the spotted feet.

In consequence of the curse of Vasiṣṭha, the king became a cannibal every sixth watch of the day for twelve years, and in that state wandered through the forests, and devoured multitudes of men. One occasion, he beheld a holy person engaged in sport with his wife. As soon as they saw his terrific form, they were frightened and endeavoured to escape. But the royal cannibal overtook and seized the husband. The wife then also desisted from flight, and earnestly entreated the savage to spare her lord exclaiming, “ Thou, Mitrasaha, art the pride of the royal House of Ikṣvāku, not a malignant fiend ! It is not in thy nature, who knowest the characters of women, to carry off and devour my husband.” But all was in vain, and, regardless of her repeated supplications, he ate the Brahman, as a tiger

and said, "Since you have barbarously disturbed the joys of a wedded pair and killed my husband, your death shall be the consequence of your associating with your queen." So saying, she entered the flames.

At the expiration of the period of his curse, Saudāsa returned home. Being reminded of the curse of the Brāhmaṇi by his wife Madayanti, he abstained from conjugal intercourse and was therefore childless. But having solicited the interposition of Vasiṣṭha, Madayanti became pregnant. The child however was not born for seven years, when the queen, becoming impatient, divided the womb with a sharp stone and was thereby delivered. The child was thence called Aśmaka.<sup>297</sup>

The above account is corroborated by the Bhāgavata.<sup>298</sup> As it is, it shows no interference on the part of Viśvāmitra in the affair of Vasiṣṭha and Kalmāṣapāda. The Mbh. supplies the link viz. that the Rākṣasa, who played the mischief by impersonating Vasiṣṭha for the moment, was employed by Viśvāmitra.<sup>299</sup> This was specially so when, according to Mbh., the king was cursed by Śakti son of Vasiṣṭha. Nevertheless, some disagreements among the several authorities must be acknowledged with regard to this story. According to the Bṛhaddevatā, at a great sacrifice by Sudās, Viśvāmitra was overcome by Śakti. Consequently Viśvāmitra sank down unconscious. But to him the Jamadagnis gave speech called Sasarpari, having brought her from the dwelling of the Sun. That speech dispelled the Kuśikas' loss of intelligence (a-matim).<sup>300</sup> The Sarvānukramaṇi, introducing RV VII 32, says that Śakti, thrown to the fire by the Saudāsas, composed the last pragāthā, but before he finished, he was consumed; Vasiṣṭha completed it.<sup>301</sup> The Bṛhaddevatā, again, points out that Vasiṣṭha's hundred sons were killed by the Saudāsas or by Sudāsa who in consequence of a curse had been transformed into a Rakṣas.<sup>302</sup> Now it is this story that is found elaborated in the Mbh. The other two stories are not traced in the Purāṇas.<sup>303</sup>

The Mahābhārata relates the conflict<sup>304</sup> between Śakti and Kalmāṣapāda for precedence of giving way in the road,<sup>305</sup> the king beat him with a whip whereupon Śakti cursed him to become a cannibal. At this stage it is reported that Viśvāmitra

297. Viṣṇu IV 4.19-38.

298. Bhāgavata IX 9.18-39. *Vide* also Rām. VII 65 and Bṛhannāradya IX 3-151.

299. Mbh. I 176. *see infra*.

300. BD IV 112-114. Sasarpari is called Sūryasya duhitā in RV III 53.15. "Sasarparih sarvatra gadyapadyātmakatvena sarpaṇaśilā vāgdevatā"—Sāyaṇa. BD hereby suggests that the other Kuśikas, as well as Viśvāmitra, had been rendered unconscious by Śakti. *cf.* Śiṣya on Sarvā. p. 107.

301. Sarvā. p. 25 and Śiṣya thereon, p. 130 f.

302. BD VI 28 and 33-34. "Such is the sacred tradition." (iti vai Śrutiḥ). Note that the 100 sons are meant here whereas Śakti's death is not specified.

303. AIHT p. 208, n.5. The two stories are Śakti overcoming Viśvāmitra and his being thrown into the fire by the followers of Sudās.

304. *Vide* Mbh. I 176, 177 and 182.

305. "Mama panthā mahārāja dharma eṣa sanātanaḥ /  
Rājñā sarveṣu dharmeṣu deyaḥ panthā dvijātaye //  
Ibid. 176.8.

who watched the incident, himself remaining invisible, directed a Rākṣasa to possess the king.<sup>306</sup> Denounced by the curse, Kalmāṣapāda happened to offend a Brāhman guest by offering human flesh as food. He again cursed him. The cannibal in him was now roused and poor Śakti became the first victim ; and later on his younger brothers also were devoured. Vasiṣṭha bore the grief when he learnt that Śakti's wife Adṛśyanti was pregnant, so that there would be progeny to continue the line. It so happened that, as he returned to his abode with the daughter-in-law, they happened to encounter the cannibal king. Adṛśyanti got terrified, but Vasiṣṭha put down the demon by a huṅkāra, which ended the curse actually and restored the distressed king to normal life and thinking. Coming back to his old self, Kalmāṣapāda paid due homage to Vasiṣṭha and, later on, requested him to beget a son on his queen Madayanti, which extraordinary procedure became necessary on account of a Brāhmaṇi's curse during his cursed life when he deprived her of her joy with the husband by devouring him. Thus we see that the Rakṣas who was set upon the depraved king was responsible for all the misery of Vasiṣṭha and the death of his sons.

Among the stories that centre round Viśvāmitra, that of Satyavrata Triśaṅku has somewhat pre-eminently caught the Purāṇic fancy.<sup>307</sup> Trayyāruṇa was a king of the Ikṣvāku race. His son was Satyavrata who got the appellation of Triśaṅku and was degraded to the condition of cāṇḍāla, or outcast. According to Vāyu-purāṇa he was banished by his father for his wickedness (adharma). The Brahma and Harivaṃśa detail his inequity at length. He carried off the betrothed wife of a citizen, as the wedding ceremony was in progress. He was therefore banished by the father and directed to live among the śvapākas (dog-eaters). Vasiṣṭha did not intercede. Then there came a terrible famine in which Indra did not shower rain for twelve years. Viśvāmitra had left his wife and children in that country and gone to the shores of the sea for penance. In this situation, Satyavrata provided the flesh of deer for the sustenance of the family, suspending it upon a spreading fig-tree on the borders of the Ganges, that he might not subject them to the indignity of receiving at the hands of an outcast. Viśvāmitra's wife was even prepared to sell her middle son for a hundred cows, tying a collar round the neck, perhaps to proclaim him for sale (gale baddhvā). Satyavrata interceded and got him liberated ; the boy came to be known as Gālava. Thus did Satyavrata spend the twelve years, proving all the while helpful to Viśvāmitra's family but bearing unrelenting hatred against Vasiṣṭha as the latter did not sympathise with him. Once while he had to hunt up food, and when game failed, he killed the cow of Vasiṣṭha. Whereupon, the preceptor denounced him as Triśaṅku, "one who has committed three sins," viz. displeasing the father, killing a cow and eating

306. Just when the offending king was about to apologise, Viśvāmitra directed the fiend to possess him, and by his supernatural powers incited both the parties to excesses. The prime cause for all this was the hostility between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. The latter had asked the king to perform a sacrifice with him as priest, whereas Vasiṣṭha was the family priest. The king naturally preferred him. So Viśvāmitra was bent upon harassing both. Ibid. 176.4 and 15-22.

307. Viṣṇu IB 8.13-14, Brahma 7.97 to 8.28, Brahmaṇḍa III 63.77-114, Vāyu 88.78-116, Bhāgavata IX 7.4-5 etc. cf. Hari. 12.11 to 13.23.

flesh not previously consecrated. Returning from penance, Viśvāmitra was very much pleased with Triśaṅku's friendly services and pressed him to choose a boon. Satyavrata wished to be bodily elevated to Heaven. Viśvāmitra installed him on the throne and as all, including Vasiṣṭha, could see, celebrated a sacrifice and sent him bodily to heaven. It was seen in the foregoing pages how, according to the Rāmāyaṇa, Viśvāmitra was prepared to contend not only with one individual Vasiṣṭha, but with the whole host of the gods. When he was out to sacrifice for an outcast, the gods naturally did not heed for he was acting against Rta, established path. But he was determined to please them or have his own way by creating, by means of his supernatural powers, a different Indra and a different firmament with full stellar and planetary complement. The gods had but to acknowledge the force of his determination and compromise with him, with the result that Triśaṅku was left suspended in mid-air, forming a constellation in the southern hemisphere along with other new planets and stars created by Viśvāmitra. The Bhāgavata says admiringly that Triśaṅku is still visible in the sky (aydāpi divi dṛṣyate). The Vāyu furnishes some further information. "Men acquainted with the Purāṇas recite these two stanzas: 'By the favour of Viśvāmitra, the illustrious Triśaṅku shines in heaven along with the gods, through the kindness of that sage. Slowly passes the lovely night in winter, embellished by the moon, decorated with three watches and ornamented with the constellation Triśaṅku.'"<sup>308</sup> Triśaṅku is identified with the Orion, the three bright stars of his belt being the three śaṅkus, (stakes or pins) which form his name.

The Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra feud reaches its climax in the story of Hariścandra, son of Satyavrata Triśaṅku. According to the Śunaśsepa legend related in the AB and other works, Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were high priests co-operating with the sacrifice performed by Hariścandra. It might then be a subsequent event in the life of that king, if not fabricated by the fertile imagination of the story-teller. The Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa<sup>309</sup> expands the story at considerable length. One day

308. "Atrāpyudāharantīmau ślokau paurāṇikā janāḥ /  
Viśvāmitraprasādena Triśaṅkur divi rājate /  
Devais sārddham mahātejā'nugrahāt tasya dhīmataḥ /  
Śanair yātyabalā ramyā hemante candramanditā /  
Alaṅkṛtā tribhir bhāvais triśaṅkugrahabhūṣitā /

Vāyu 88.114-116.

Wilson's emendation niśā in the place of abalā is better, though he did not find ms. evidence therefor. But abalā yields no sense and has no antecedent in the text; it might be dyaus, but the epithet abalā is hardly appropriate. Wilson has yāmāḥ for bhāvāḥ. The Ānand SS. edition records no v.l. cf. Wilson's Translation of Viṣṇu, p. 372 footnote.

309. Mārka. cantos 7-9. This theme has been dramatised by Kṣemīśvara in his Caṇḍa-Kauśika (10th or 11th cent. A.D.). More imaginative is the title given to vernacular plays on the subject: Satya-Hariścandra. Popular impression now is that Viśvāmitra was a cruel sage and all that. How different from the Vedic Viśvāmitra, "heaven-born, favourite of the gods, great sage." (Mahan ṛṣir devajā devajūtaḥ. RV III 53.9). One is tempted to ask whether or to what extent, if at all, has the cause of TRUTH been served by unbridled tradition, by the unscrupulous story-teller of Harikathā-performer, or even by the high handed poet. In fact TRUTH has been at the mercy of these factors. Says a Subhāṣita—

He Rājānas tyajata sukavipremabandhe virodham  
Śuddhā kīrtis sphurati bhavatām nūnam etatprasādāt //  
Tuṣṭair baddham tad alaghu Raghusvāminas saccharitram  
Ruṣṭair nītas tribhuvanajayī hāsyamārgam daśāsyah //

while Hariścandra was hunting he heard female lamentations, which proceeded "from the Sciences who were being mastered by the austere fervid sage Viśvāmitra and were crying out in alarm at his superiority." Hariścandra, as the defender of the distressed, went to the rescue, but Viśvāmitra was so provoked by his interference that the Sciences instantly perished and Hariścandra was reduced to a state of abject helplessness. Viśvāmitra demanded the sacrificial gift due to him as a Brāhman and the king offered him whatever he might choose to ask, 'gold, his own son, wife, body, life, kingdom, good fortune,' whatever was dearest. Viśvāmitra stripped him of his wealth and kingdom, leaving him nothing but a garment of bark and his wife and son. In a state of destitution, he left his kingdom and Viśvāmitra struck Śaibyā, the queen, with his staff to hasten her reluctant departure. To escape from his oppressor he proceeded to the holy city of Benares, but the relentless sage was waiting for him and demanded the completion of his gift. With bitter grief, wife and child were sold, and there remained only himself. Dharma, the god of justice, appeared in the form of a hideous and offensive Cāṇḍāla and offered to buy him. Notwithstanding the exile's repugnance and horror, Viśvāmitra insisted upon the sale, and Hariścandra was carried off "bound, beaten, confused and afflicted," to the abode of the cāṇḍāla. He was then employed at the grave-yard to collect clothes etc. from the dead bodies. In this horrid place and degrading work he spent twelve months. His wife then came to the cemetery to perform the obsequies of her son, who had died of serpent bite. They recognised each other and resolved to die upon the funeral pyre of their son, though Hariścandra hesitated to take away his own life without the consent of the master. After all was prepared, he gave himself up to meditation on Viṣṇu. The gods then arrived, headed by Dharma and accompanied by Viśvāmitra. Dharma entreated him to refrain from his intention, and Indra informed him "that he, his wife, and son, had conquered heaven by their good works." Hariścandra declared that he could not go to heaven without the permission of his master the cāṇḍāla. Dharma then revealed himself. When this difficulty was removed, Hariścandra objected to go to heaven without his faithful subjects. This request was granted by Indra and after Viśvāmitra had inaugurated Rohitāśva, the king's son, to be his successor, Hariścandra, his friends and followers, all ascended in company to heaven. There he was induced by the sage Nārada to boast of his merits and this led to his expulsion from heaven. As he was falling he repented for his fault and was forgiven. His downward course was arrested and he and his followers dwell in any aerial city, which, according to popular belief, is still visible occasionally in mid-air.

The indignation of Vasiṣṭha at Viśvāmitra's insatiableness produced a quarrel, in which their mutual imprecations changed them to two birds, the Śārāli (āḍī) and the Baka.<sup>310</sup> In these forms they fought for a considerable term until Brahma

310. Āḍī is a kind of heron, and Baka is the crane, the former being of a portentous height of 2,000 yojanas (= 18000 miles) and the latter of 8090 yojanas. Their very movements would shake the earth, how much more when they pull up their energy to kill each other. Ref. Mārka. ch. 9. See also MOST I p. 379 et seq and p. 386 f.

interposed and reconciled them. The Bhāgavata<sup>311</sup> alludes to this story, in its notice of Hariścandra.

This section may be concluded with two impressions : 1. The Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra rivalry, though a thing of the ancient past, is a reality in the conception of the Purāṇas. In fact, it is never doubted. Similarly, it was the belief that Viśvāmitra was born in a Kṣatriya race, but elevated himself to Brāhmanhood by penance. 2. Secondly, under cover of tradition, new stories have sprung up to illustrate the mutual hatred of the two sages. The story of Saudāsa Kalmāṣapāda took its origin in the BD<sup>312</sup> but expanded with fanciful structure in Mbh. and the Purāṇas. The first record of Triśaṅku story was in the Epics (Rām. and Mbh.) and further elaborated in the various Purāṇas. The story of Hariścandra germinating in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, in which the sages are not enemies if not friends of each other, transformed itself into a classic as it were, to depict the very climax of their enmity. Justification for all this fabrication is that unshakable, mysterious TRADITION !

## VIII

### RECENT OPINIONS

In the study of the life history of the sages Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, who are reputed personalities from Vedic times, we have naturally to delve deep into the literature of the Vedas for a true understanding. As time advanced and tradition spread through diverse channels, it is natural that the original structure of their story got hazy if not distorted. John Muir very effectively advocated a return to the study of the originals. He said :<sup>313</sup> " The Vedic hymns being far more ancient than the Epic and Purāṇic complications must be more trustworthy guides to a knowledge of the remotest Indian antiquity. While the epic poems and the Purāṇas no doubt embody numerous ancient traditions, yet these have been freely altered according to the caprice or dogmatic views of later writers, and have received many purely fictitious additions. The Vedic hymns on the contrary have been preserved unchanged from a very remote period and exhibit a faithful reflection of the social, religious and ecclesiastical condition of the age in which they were composed and of the feelings which were awakened by contemporary occurrences. As yet there was no conscious perversion or colouring of facts for dogmatic or sectarian purposes.... It is here therefore that we may look for some light on the real relations between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra."

311. Traiśaṅkayo Hariścandro Viśvāmitra-Vasiṣṭhayoh /  
Yannimittam abhūd yuddham pakṣiṇor bahuvarṣikam // Bhā. IX 7.6.

312. BD VI 28 and 84. The germ of the story is however seen in the TS and the Brāhmaṇas, which depict that Vasiṣṭha's sons were killed by the Saudāsas. The sage then saw the rite of forty-nine nights etc. to obtain progeny as well as to take revenge against the Saudāsas. ' Vasiṣṭho hataputro ' kāmayaṭa vindeya prajāṃ abhi Saudāsāu bhāveyaṃ iti ' cf. TS VII 4.7. KB IV,8, PB IV 7.8, etc.

313. MOST I p. 318, cf. Max Muller ASL p. 37.

The whole inquiry centres round the following issues :

- (1) The identity of the two sages.
- (2) Had Viśvāmitra any claim for kingship by birth or by acquisition ?
- (3) Did Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra ever hate each other ?

It is acknowledged on all hands that both Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were highly esteemed as Ṛṣis, seers of entire Maṇḍalas of the Ṛgveda. That one was a Brahmr̥ṣi and the other a Rājars̥i promoted to the rank of Brahmaṣi is an idea quite foreign to the Veda. Regarding Viśvāmitra, the Vedic Index says<sup>314</sup> " There is no trace of his kingship in the RV, but the Nirukta (II 24) calls his father Kuśika, a king ; the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII 18.9) refers to Śunaśsepa as succeeding to the lordship of the Jahnus as well as the divine lore of the Gāthins, and the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa (xxi.12.2) mentions Viśvāmitra as a king. But there is no real trace of this kingship of Viśvāmitra. It may probably be dismissed as mere legend with no more foundation at most than that Viśvāmitra was of a family which once had been royal. But even this is doubtful."<sup>315</sup>

Regarding the strife between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, Oldenberg holds that it " is not to be found in the Ṛgveda. On the other hand, Geldner is hardly right in finding in RV a compressed account indicating the rivalry of Śakti, Vasiṣṭha's son, with Viśvāmitra, the acquisition by Viśvāmitra of special skill in speech and the revenge of Viśvāmitra who secured the death of Śakti by Sudās's servants."<sup>316</sup> These pictures, we have seen, were only supplied by tradition,<sup>317</sup> and not by the text of RV. As we look back at the Veda, through the colourful foreground of legendary matter provided by later literature, the mind is so caught up by the tales and hence somewhat vitiated in its appreciation of the Vedic origin. One is apt to be guided away by high authorities like the Bṛhaddevatā and the Sarvānukramaṇi when they introduce the Ṛgvedic passages in an attractive legendary setting. These works themselves are ancient and moreover they have the unassailable TRADITION to inspire credence. Thus in the Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra relationship, to quote tradition or even to imagine it will not be subject to any doubt. So eminent a seer was Vasiṣṭha, heaven-born ; how ever could a mortal like Viśvāmitra, himself seer though, vie with him ? In a controversy, or a philosophic discussion in a sacrificial assembly (sadas), Viśvāmitra could not stand the attack of Vasiṣṭha's son the learned Śakti, with the result that he was silenced. Bearing a grudge against Śakti, Viśvāmitra bided his time and with the help of the Saudāsas brought about his death. Now Vasiṣṭha the aggrieved father had to take notice of it all ; hence, he saw the Rākṣogha-sūkta or perform a rite of forty-nine nights to avenge the death of his son or sons.<sup>318</sup> This is a perfectly reasoned

314. VI, Vol. II, p. 311.

315. Criticised by Pargiter. AIHT pp. 12-18.

316. VI Vol. II, p. 275 f.

317. e.g. BD VI 84 (iti vai Śrutih), Sarvā. p. 107 (prāhur itihāsam purātanam) or, p. 183 (āsām prasvāpinitvam tu kathāsu parikalpyate) ; etc.

318. See supra note.

story but the regret of the inquirer will be when in the Vedic Text, he neither finds even a remote reference to the alleged events nor anything pointing to them in the very mantras which are set in their framework. The meaning of the mantras bears no relevancy to the fancied story.<sup>319</sup> The Śakti-Viśvāmitra controversy is superimposed on RV III 53.15-16; and the killing of Śakti on RV VII 82.26—these are sufficient to illustrate the above contention that the later stories have had no foundation in the original text. Then tradition alone is their resort; and tradition is mysterious and has to be regarded for the very reason, perhaps!

Regarding the veracity of the Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra strife, the findings of Maurice Bloomfield are very valuable.<sup>320</sup> In his *Ṛgveda Repetitions*, he has pointed out how as many as four consecutive verses are common to the Maṇḍalas of Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra: (VII 2.8-11 = III 4.8-11). Both are Āpri-hymns. Besides, the two Books share no less than 14 lines in common. Speaking of groups of stanzas repeated in the *Ṛgveda*, Bloomfield observes: "There comes to mind in this connection the traditional hostility of the Viśvāmitras, the reputed authors of the 3rd book and the Vasiṣṭhas, the reputed authors of the 7th book. This centres about the so-called Vasiṣṭha-dveṣīnyah (RV III 53.21-14) which are supposed to contain a curse of the Viśvāmitras against the Vasiṣṭhas. As early as TS 3.1.7.3; 5.4.11.3, Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha are opposing parties in a Vihava<sup>321</sup> or conflicting call upon the gods. Roth and Geldner regard the traditional hostility of the two ṛṣi clans as old. But the hymns do not express it. At least, it is strange that their two Āpri-hymns III 4 and VII 2 share no less than four stanzas word for word. We should expect diversity there if anywhere."

Having started so well with almost a pledge that one has to look back to the Vedas<sup>322</sup> for the truth of the legends, one finds the versatile scholar J. Muir succumb to the influence of the legends narrated in later literature. Relying on the veracity of these he brought to bear quite serious thought over the transformation which had come upon the alleged Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra feud in successive ages and put forward certain generalisations like "contests between the Brāhmaṇs and Kṣatriyas" apparently for superiority.<sup>323</sup> The contests however ended in glorifying the qualities of the Brāhmaṇ or the principles and modes of life for which he stood. In recent times, F. E. Pargiter pursued the study, especially of the Purāṇas, on the same lines and, postulated the theory of two traditions in ancient history and legend, viz. the Brāhmaṇa tradition and Kṣatriya tradition. In so doing he laid at the former's door the blame of distorting facts to suit its own purpose of maintaining

319. Supra and notes 38 and 155-157.

320. Vide Bloomfield: RVR (HOS vols. 20 and 24) pp.xviii, 492 and footnote; 646-47 also Max Muller ASL p. 465.

321. Supra n.36. Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni had a contest with Vasiṣṭha, Jamadagni saw the Vihavya hymn (RV X 126.1) and drew away all the power and strength of the adversary. Vihavya is the seer of the Hymn according to the Anukramaṇī.

322. MOST I 318.

323. A whole chapter is written on this (MOST I ch. IV pp. 296-400). Expressions here and there like incidents being "coloured by the Brāhmaṇical prepossessions of the narrator" (p. 359) indicate the perspective which cannot be described as truly historical.



the importance of the Brāhmana in the social structure of the age.<sup>324</sup> To this end, he made capital out of the legend of Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra relationship (chapter I). He would have rendered signal service to ancient history and tradition if, instead of eking out the subtle but harmful distinctions in tradition, he had concentrated on proclaiming the slender foundation on which such an undesirable structure of hatred was built.

It is necessary to meet the arguments and theories advanced in the book : ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORICAL TRADITION, but it may be permissible to offer some remarks on the perspective of the dissertation as a whole. Pargiter has made a profound study of the Purāṇas. He perceives two currents of tradition, the Brāhmanical and the Kṣatriya ; the former reflected in the Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and other Vedic books, and the latter reflected mostly in the Epics and the Purāṇas. One cannot deny the existence, from time immemorial, of a twofold tradition in any given age. The version of a story, for instance, among the literate based on books and the version among the less literate common folk which is based on hearsay : these two represent this twofold tradition. But Pargiter has viewed this most natural sociological aspect in a wrong perspective inasmuch as he has dubbed the twofold stream as two distinct entities, not infrequently, motivated by considerations of mutual exclusiveness among Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. In this kind of interpretation, he takes inspiration evidently, as pointed out above, from Dr. John Muir who, in his ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXTS, has developed a doctrine, par excellence, of Brāhmaṇa-Kṣatriya hostility. Such rivalry and conflict between individuals may have existed in ancient times ; but they were not part of anybody's or any group's beliefs and duties. Certain circumstances forced certain happenings, but it will be a great mistake to suppose that a vein or an undercurrent of rivalry and feud always subsisted these happenings from age to age. This is a precept which does incalculable harm to the student of history and to the historical method of cultural investigation. The charge, for instance, is that the Brāhmanical priest dominated and got on with gifts etc. from kings. Be it so, what harm ? The conditions were such. The social codes were written by Brāhmanical priests, quite true. But why does the Brāhmanical priest write a thing which is not for the welfare of society and which is not acceptable thereto ? In the revolutions of ages, changes are inevitable ; that is the Law of the Universe. The āstika and the nāstika, like good and bad, have always been co-existent and thrive on each other, really. Every system or science has had supporters and dissenters, and we think each is strong as such, because of friends and foes. If we pile up the brick of the same size and symmetry one upon the other in one order only, the pile will

324. Pargiter AIHT (1922). The two traditions explained pp. 6-7 ; a ruthless attack on what he calls the brāhmanic tradition characterises the whole work (see pp. 10-11, chs. II and V). The author's study of ancient Indian literature has betrayed want of appreciation. To meet his arguments is outside the purview of this study, indeed. Suffice it to mention that Pargiter's conclusions are not, in general, commended by scholars. cf. Winternitz : HIL p. 521 n.3. "I doubt, however, whether we are justified in drawing the line between the Kṣatriya tradition and the brahmanical tradition as definitely as is assumed by Pargiter." cf. again, p. 528 n.2. In earlier years, Pargiter's views were contested by Prof. Keith : JRAS (1914) 1021 ff., (1915) 328 ff.

topple down with one push ; but pile them lengthwise and breadthwise, the wall gains in resistance. That is fundamental law. But if we try to dissect and place the lengthwise and breadthwise bricks separately, where is the wall? It is the first duty of man to visualise this unchangeable Law of Rta or Cosmic Order, with a desire for knowledge for its own sake. There he should try to separate them. The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (R. L. Stevenson) is an instance in point. Genius will turn to perversity if its sharp edge is turned to selfish use. There have been frantic attempts in Vedic times to grapple the Unknown. Severest penance and will power have challenged the divine custodians of that hidden TRUTH, who have now and then relented, but on pain of the head splitting into a thousand pieces if the secret is divulged. There has been rivalry even among gods for this knowledge as is borne out by the story of Dadhyañc, to whom the Sun-god imparted the "madhuvidyā" (nectar of knowledge). Asked by the Aśvins, Dadhyañc explained the pledge and begged forgiveness. But the deft surgeons of heaven grafted a horse's head on the sage and persuaded him to give out the secret knowledge through the horse's mouth. The object achieved, they replaced the original head. The sage, however, did not escape the Sun's wrath. That apart, experiments with truth, ridden to extremes, are fraught with danger to humanity. This does not require elaboration, living as we do in this Atomic Age.

Should we then eschew knowledge and feel complacent with the maxim 'Ignorance is bliss' ? No. We *should* gain knowledge ; but it should be subject to strict discipline, with passions and emotions sublimated into that stratum of peace and realisation of one's oneness with the Universe. Otherwise we are let down. In a miniature form Muir and Pargiter have propounded the twin traditions and unduly emphasised their apparent incompatibility, perhaps not realising that such an attempt will leave deep furrows in that vulnerable body called Society, which would be difficult to level up.<sup>325</sup> There have been upheavels in the past in our Bharatavarṣa ; everytime, society has survived and stood on its tradition, with a reorientation needed by the times. It has emerged with a new and bright outlook. The historian's duty, however, is to unravel the strings, but never to pull them !

Taking into consideration so many activities on the part of the sages Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, it appears marvellous for one individual to achieve so much in one life-time. As it is common in the legends, a Ṛṣi does penance to please Indra ordinarily for a thousand years. Viśvāmitra did penance, according to the Rāmāyaṇa, for thousands of years, in all the four quarters put together. Vasiṣṭha is the priest of the Ikṣvāku race. Though once, perhaps at the beginning of his career, he had to give up his body on account of Nimi's curse, he was before long reborn and filled the same office as priest of the Ikṣvākus with all due respect and authority. Ever since he remained immortal down to the reign of Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha. Moreover, he laid the whole world under a debt of gratitude, according to the Viṣṇu-purāṇa (III 3.9), by being the redactor of the Veda in the

325. Pargiter, it may be recalled, was a member of the Indian Civil Service.

eighth Dvāpara.<sup>326</sup> In the Rāmāyaṇa, both the sages are connected with the Ikṣvāku kings Triśaṅku, Ambariṣa, Sudās and Daśaratha who are, from one another, separated by very long intervals, being 28th, 44th, 49th and 60th descendants respectively from the founder. The legends therefore take it for granted that the sages, by virtue of their austerities, were men of 'miraculous longevity,' 'possessed of a vitality altogether superhuman.'<sup>327</sup> The common conception is that these holy sages are immortal; they reside in heaven or somewhere in the Himālayan region, but invisible to mortals. Now and then they would descend upon the earth to bless the Believer. This tenet affords safe anchor for the popular mind; for, what is impossible for the gods and saints of the golden Past?

Or, there is, to solve this riddle, the other expedient of counting a number of Vasiṣṭhas and Viśvāmitras. Thus Pargiter discovers more than nine Vasiṣṭhas and three or more Viśvāmitras.<sup>328</sup> It is curious thing, however, that the old sages have mostly been designated by their gotras as it is the case even today in some tracts of India where people are known by their surnames. In the RV also, we are familiar with expressions Viśvāmitrāḥ, Vasiṣṭhāḥ, Jamadagnayaḥ etc. They and their descendants are seers of hymns in the various "family-books." It is reasonable to think that those that came after the great Ṛṣis scrupulously kept up their traditions and distinguishing characteristics. But through centuries of life envisaged by the various incidents connected with the two sages, it would be unsound to count the number of them involved. And so far as the people are concerned it has been immaterial how many they were; for their exemplary characteristics were important for posterity. The saintliness and forbearance, for instance, of Vasiṣṭha; the dynamic activity and universal friendliness of Viśvāmitra; the one an embodiment of divine grace and the other an apostle of Human Endeavour (Puruṣakāra).

## IX

### SUMMARY

1. The RV. presents Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra as great sages who were leaders of their respective clans and who established sound traditions. They are seers of maṇḍalas; favourites of the gods Varuṇa and Indra respectively; endowed with supernatural powers such as to render rivers fordable etc. Both befriended, and were priests of, Sudās, evidently on different occasions. Vasiṣṭha saved Sudās

326 'The Vedas have already been divided 28 times in the course of the present or Vaivasvata Manvantara; this division has always taken place in the Dvāpara age of each system of four yugas. In the first Dvāpara, Brahmā Svayambhū himself divided them; in the sixth, Mrtyu (Death or Yama); whilst in the eighth Dvāpara, it was Vasiṣṭha who was the Vyāsa or divider.' MOST I, p. 336.

327. Ibid p. 362.

328. AIHT Ch. XVIII. It is unconvincing but amusing to see Pargiter hunt up the personal names of the several Vasiṣṭhas, Devarāj, Āpava, Atharvanidhi I and II, Śreṣṭhabhāj, Suvarcas etc. A similar attempt at unmaking different Viśvāmitras by their names proved futile ch. XXI. The one name suggested i.e. Viśvāratha is more likely an attribute than a name. See supra.

from a disaster in his **Battle with the Ten Kings** (Dāśarājña), by steering him across the Paruṣṇi before being overpowered by the enemies. Viśvāmitra similarly led the same chieftan across the confluence of Vipāś and Śutudri; and performed a thousand-offer-sacrifice before a distinguished gathering of the Āṅgirasas, the Bhojas and others. Both sages expressed themselves powerfully against enemies and constantly invoked the protection of the gods to be saved from their malignant attacks.

2. The first and only mention of a discord between them in the later Samhitās is in the TS. It was a dispute between Vasiṣṭha on the one part and Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni on the other, regarding a 'conflicting call (vi-hava) of the gods', as Bloomfield puts it. The text however says that in that dispute, Jamadagni saw the "vihavya" hymn (RV X 128.1)<sup>329</sup> and drew away all the strength of the adversary. The TS also records, for the first time about Vasiṣṭha's bereavement caused by the death of his son or sons (hataputraḥ) and about his desire to wreak vengeance against the Saudāsas. On the other hand, the importance of both the sages for the Sacrifice is stressed. The SV and AV do not bear any sign of the rivalry; the latter simply praises them uniformly.

3. The Brāhmaṇas further emphasise the contribution to the sacrificial system made by the two sages, who together officiated at Hariścandra's sacrifice (AB). Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra are the Mind and Speech or Breath and Ear of the sacrifice; they are, to the sacrifice, like two wheels to a chariot. At first Vasiṣṭhas alone were to be Brahmā priests but later anyone who knew the job (ŚB). There is constant reference to Vasiṣṭha's bereavement and the sacrifice which he performed or the sāmans (Janitra) which he saw, to obtain progeny and to defeat the Saudāsas. PB is the only work to speak of a four-day rite of victory (sañjaya) which Viśvāmitra, king of the Jahnus (Jahnūnām rājā) performed to obtain the kingdom. Viśvāmitra's martial spirit and sportsmanship are adverted to in connection with the Krośa and Rohita-Kūliya sāmans.

It is remarkable that nowhere does any Brāhmaṇa say or suggest that Viśvāmitra was responsible for Vasiṣṭha's misfortune.

4. Yāska does not refer to any hatred between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. Explaining the name Vipāś, he says that the river got the name because of her loosening the bonds when Vasiṣṭha wanted to drown himself in her waters.

It is in the Brhaddevatā that the first reference is made to the Vasiṣṭha-dveṣinyah (Vasiṣṭha-haters) and an injunction that they should neither be recited nor heard on pain of the head splitting into hundred parts etc. Poignant reference is made to the calamity which befell Vasiṣṭha in that King Sudāsa, turning a demon, killed his hundred sons. Vasiṣṭha's pedigree has been described as also his funny experiences in a dream. There is an explicit statement that Viśvāmitra, having ruled the Earth, attained the status of a Brahmarṣi and also got a hundred and one

329. According to Sarvā. Vihavya is the Ṛṣi of the hymn.

sons. Viśvāmitra is commended as a universal friend ; his conversation with the Rivers (Vipāś and Śutudrī) is stated as also his discomfiture at the hands of Śakti.

The Sarvā. gives the pedigree of Viśvāmitra and briefly refers to the conversation with the Rivers ; does not at all mention the controversy with Śakti. There is a brief reference to Śunaśśepa being adopted by Viśvāmitra as his son and named Devarāta. Sarvā. relates for the first time the incident of Śakti thrown into fire by Saudāśas, whereas the incident is not recognised by the Tāṇḍaka (PB). Commentator Śiṣya, however, elaborates the Śakti-controversy as well as Śakti-murder.

Commentator Durgācārya refuses to comment on the Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ, because he is a Kāpiṣṭhala Vāsiṣṭha. There have been instances of scribes having omitted that portion of the text and commentary as noticed by Max Müller and Roth.<sup>330</sup>

•Nītimañjarī says that Śakti survived the flames !

Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra hostility, thus, acquired wide publicity and implicit belief by the time of BD (400 B.C.), so much so that society was prone even to expunge from the Vedic text the few verses known as Vasiṣṭha-dveṣiṇyaḥ. (So vehement is the protest in BD IV 117-120). Justice requires to be done to Viśvāmitra also.

5. In the conception of the Epics and the Purāṇas, the belief in the Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra hatred has been firmly established. The Rāmāyaṇa describes only the process of Viśvāmitra's elevation to the status of a Brahmarṣi. All revengeful stories are elaborated in the Mbh. and further in the Purāṇas. Such inveterate hatred is fancied that Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra curse each other to become Āḍi and Baka (a kind of birds of portentous height) and then fight as such for years when only Brahmā could come and pacify them with suitable admonition. General impression would be that Vasiṣṭha patiently bore all the insults and onslaughts of Viśvāmitra, whereas the latter prompted by jealousy at Vasiṣṭha's greatness always sought an opportunity to attack him. He even tried to kill him ; only the River Sarasvatī tricked him at the risk of being cursed. Finally Viśvāmitra's cruel treatment of Hariścandra is phenomenal. If all that did happen, it is hard to develop any sense of reverence to the Sage.

But a perusal of the above historical investigation will prove that later literature does not reflect the truth. There has been so much of concoction and distortion. There is no doubt that all that was done, by whomsoever that was responsible, with bad taste and unworthy motive. Let us now look at the facts and realise that the two sages were not at all enemies of each other.

6. Recent opinion has on the one hand observed the hollowness of what is called the traditional hostility between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, as revealed by a study of the most ancient literature ; and on the other, postulated that the same

reflects a continued conflict between the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas to gain supremacy over each other and that later literature has not done justice to facts.

7. *Conclusion* : (a) Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, already sages of high repute, in the comprehension of the RV, were not enemies of each other. Both of them, being eminent priests of the foremost kings of the day, had common enemies to contend with in the course of their expansion in India.

(b) There have been definite instances of their co-operation for common good. Witness the system of sacrifices which they perfected.

(c) Should there have been any differences between them, they must relate to some sacrificial technique or to a too personal jealousy at each other's success in their support to kings. But it was never such as to cause rivalry and hatred between clans and races.

(d) It lacks vedic authority to say that Viśvāmitra was a Kṣatriya elevated to Brāhmaṇhood. Apart from orthodox tradition, researches point to the fact that the caste held sway over the people during a very late period of the R̥gvedic Age.<sup>331</sup> As Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra belonged to the hoary past even at the time of R̥gvedic compilation, it will be short-sighted to attribute any varṇa to them. In the words of Bloomfield, the RV presupposes 'a long antecedent activity' and represents 'the mixed final precipitate of a later time.'<sup>332</sup> Even if in that remote age they did observe the distinction of varṇas, it was only one of profession and not of birth.<sup>333</sup>

(e) To make Viśvāmitra responsible for Vasiṣṭha's misfortune is unjust, in the absence of any tangible evidence. In later fabrications they have been allowed to wreak vengeance against each other, sufficiently. They are quits.

(f) Vasiṣṭha is saintly, is an embodiment of all that is best in man and god; therefore he is Vasiṣṭha. Viśvāmitra is brilliant, an embodiment of Human Endeavour (Puruṣakāra), a self-made Yogin and friend to all. It behoves us to transcend jealousy, hatred and acrimony, and rise to heights of sympathy, grace and good-will.

331. HIL p. 66.

332. RVR p. 646.

333. Mbh. XII 188.10.

Na viśeṣo'sti varṇānām sarvaṁ brāhmaṇam idam jagat /  
Brahmaṇā pūrvavarṣtam hi karmabhir varṇatām gatam //